DEVOUT MEDITATIONS:

FROM

DR. WATTS.

DEVOUT

MEDITATIONS;

FOR

E. WAITE.

DEVOUT MEDITATIONS:

FROM DR. WATTS.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS:

FROM MR. HOWE.

AND

DELIGHTING IN GOD:

FROM MR. HOWE.

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CONTENTS.

Courage in profeſſing Chriſtianity.

Romans i. 16.

I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt, for it is the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth. Page 1

On the inward Witneſs to Chriſtianity.

1 John v. 10.

He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witneſs in himſelf. - 14

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God. - 22

On the right Improvement of Life.

1 Cor. iii. 22.

Whether life or death, all are yours. 32.

110. 120

Pſalm lxv. 4.
Bleſſed is the man whom thou choſeſt, and cauſeſt to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts. - 47

Pſalm xliii. 2.
When ſhall I come and appear before God? - 58. 68

1 Cor. xvi. 13.
Stand faſt, quit you like men, be ſtrong. 76. 85

Job xxiii. 34.
O that I knew where I might find him; that I might come even to his ſeat: I would order my cauſe before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. 98

Rev. x. 5, 6.
And the angel which I ſaw ſtand upon the ſea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and ſware by him that liveth for ever and ever—that there ſhould be time no longer. - 134

Luke xii. 37.
Bleſſed are thoſe ſervants whom the Lord when he cometh ſhall find watching. 144

2 Theſſ. i. 10.
When he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired in all them that believe. - - 154

Rev. xiv. 17.
For the great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand? 166

A Soul prepared for Heaven.

2 Cor. v. 5.
Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing is God. - 177

On the Love of God. - 192

Meditation on Divine Love - 207

On the Love of God. - 105
Meditation on Divine Love. - 107

DEVOUT MEDITATIONS.

Courage in profeſſing Chriſtianity.

Romans i. 16.

I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt, for it is the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth.

THIS is an age wherein the goſpel of our Redeemer meets with much contempt and oppoſition. There are many, who have been brought up in the Chriſtian belief and worſhip, that begin to be weary

of Christ and his religion; they are endeavouring to find blemishes and defects in this sacred gospel, and in that blessed word of God that reveals this grace to us. Those of us who believe this gospel from the heart, have need of courage to maintain our profession of it. Let us therefore meditate this sacred text, that each of us may pronounce boldly the words of this great apostle; "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Let us enquire what is this gospel. It is a wise, holy and gracious constitution of God for the recovery of sinful man, by sending his own Son Jesus Christ in the flesh, to obey his laws which man had broken, to make a proper atonement for sin by his death, and thus to procure the favour of God, and eternal happiness for all that believe and repent, and receive the offered salvation; together with a promise of the Holy Spirit to work this faith and repentance in their hearts, to renew their sinful

nature unto holineſs, to form them on earth fit for this happineſs, and to bring them to the full poſſeſſion of it in heaven.

This Goſpel is the moſt powerful means, to ſet ſinners free from the guilt and puniſhment of ſin, and to relieve a diſtreſſed conſcience under the ſenſe of divine anger: it gives the moſt effectual ſecurity to a believer againſt the terrors of hell and eternal death; for it not only declares that there is forgiveneſs with God, but it ſhews us the foundation upon which this forgiveneſs ſtands. Now, ſays the believer, I not only ſee it proved by divine teſtimony that there is pardon of ſin to be obtained from God, but I ſee how God may do it with honour: I behold the atonement that is made by Chriſt Jeſus, his own Son. Without this goſpel I could have no juſt ground to hope for heaven; for all my beſt righteouſneſſes are imperfect, my faireſt acts of holineſs have many defects in

them; but I behold the perfect righteousness of my Saviour that has procured it a life of holiness without defect, and a most submissive obedience to a painful and shameful death has been the price and purchase of it.

The sweet and powerful influence of the love of Christ does most effectually incline me to hate every sin, and to follow after universal holiness: shall I build up again the things which my Saviour died to destroy? This would be to make him suffer agonies in vain, and run counter to all the designs of his bleeding love, and the voluntary sacrifice of his soul. I have also the glorious and perfect example of my blessed Lord. Never did virtue and religion shine so bright, and look so amiable, as in his life; and he has set it before me as my pattern. I feel the attractive and divine power of it. Where my Lord leads, I must follow; for I would fain be like him. He draws me by his ex-

ample, and he draws me too by his heavenly promiſes. He ſpreads the glories and the joys of heaven before me, to allure my hope; I ſee thoſe ſacred glories, I long after the poſſeſſion of theſe unfading joys, and I muſt and will keep the path that leads to paradiſe, that where my Lord is I may be alſo. The rules and precepts of holineſs which my Lord has taught me are more pure, more clean, more perfect, more divine and godlike than even any other ſcheme of rules and duties was; and the joyful and dreadful motives given me to preſs after this holineſs are infinitely beyond all the motives that any doctrine or religion has propoſed. Bleſſed be God that I ever learnt theſe holy rules, that I ever felt the power of theſe divine motives, and am become a lover of holineſs. Thus the goſpel prepares the ſaint for heaven, and fits every power of his ſoul for the buſineſs and bleſſedneſs of thoſe happy regions.

Once, ſays he, I had no delight in ſpiritual things; but now I taſte them with delight, and I rejoice in the hopes of a ſweeter and more complete taſte of them on high. Once I had no love to God, no delight in him, no deſire after him; now he is the object of my warmeſt love, and of my ſweeteſt meditations. Heaven itſelf, as deſcribed in the word of God, was not pleaſant to me. What! the everlaſting continuance of a ſabbath? Perpetual employment of worſhip and ſervice to be done for God everlaſtingly! Theſe are things that were not agreeable to carnal nature; but, by the influence of this goſpel of Chriſt, my heart is new moulded, and I delight in the fore-thoughts of ſuch a heaven as the goſpel deſcribes. Now I can venture to die; for my ſpirit ſhall be received to dwell with my Saviour among the ſpirits of the juſt that are made perfect. Theſe feeble and withering limbs of mine, I can cheer-

fully commit to the duſt and the grave; for the great trumpet muſt ſound, the dead muſt ariſe, my Redeemer will call my fleſh from its dark priſon; I ſhall ariſe to meet the Lord in the air, and dwell with him for ever in unknown worlds of bleſſedneſs.

How unreaſonable then, O my ſoul, are all the reproaches that are caſt upon this goſpel! A goſpel that ſaves mankind from miſery, ſin and eternal death! A goſpel that teaches men how to appear before a holy and terrible God with comfort, though their ſins are many, and their righteouſneſs imperfect! and all this upon ſuch ſolid ground as juſtifies its higheſt promiſes and propoſals to the reaſon of men! It is a goſpel that changes our ſinful natures into holineſs, and reforms our hearts as well as our lives. A goſpel that, aided by divine power, creates ſouls a-new, and raiſes dead ſinners to life! A goſpel that ſo diſturbs the kingdom

of Satan, as to take thousands of slaves and captives out of his dominions, to transfer them into the glorious kingdom of Christ, and make them cheerful and willing subjects! A gospel that gloriously fulfils the first promise, and makes it appear, that the seed of the woman hath broken the serpent's head, and destroyed the works of the devil. We have never seen, we have never learned this gospel aright, if we have not felt it to be the power of God unto salvation. Let us never be ashamed of any of the doctrines, precepts or promises of this gospel; for they are all holy and heavenly; all of them have divine power accompanying them to lead souls to salvation. Hence let us learn the true method of obtaining Christian courage, to profess the gospel of Christ against all opposition: it is by getting it wrought into our hearts and lives by Christian experience, and not by learning a mere form of words, in a

road of education and catechiſm. Hours of temptation may come, when all the arguments that are treaſured up in our memory, will hardly be able to keep our faith and hope firm and ſtedfaſt, if this goſpel is not wrought into our hearts with power, if we have not felt it to be the power of God unto ſalvation. That the goſpel is the power of God to ſalvation is an argument of wide extent; for it belongs to the wiſe and to the unwiſe, to the weak and to the ſtrong; it anſwers every objection that an Infidel can bring either from the doctrine or profeſſion of this goſpel. Let us be furniſhed with this glorious argument, and learn to manage it well for the defence of our faith.

Do they tell us that the doctrines of the goſpel contain myſteries in them, and things that are unſearchable? Do they endeavour to put us out of countenance by ridiculing the truths of Chriſtianity, as being contrary to the common opinions and reaſoning

of men? We may give this ſhort reply to them, and ſay, I am ſure they are not contrary to reaſon; for they are divine. They are not incredible, nor do they want ſufficient evidence; for God himſelf, by his own Spirit, has borne witneſs to them in my heart: he has wrought an almighty work there by the means of his goſpel: he has created me a-new unto faith, and hope, and holineſs: he has turned my heart from earth to heaven, and ſubdued the ſinful inclinations of my nature by the precepts, by the promiſes, by the glorious diſcoveries of the goſpel: he has made uſe of it to ſave my ſoul, and I carry about with me an uncontroulable proof that it came from heaven. Do they tell us of many that are called Chriſtians, whoſe lives are vicious? Surely they never knew this goſpel in truth; they are but falſe profeſſors of it. There are thouſands that can bear this witneſs to the goſpel, that it has changed their hearts: it

has renewed their nature; it has made them hate every vice, and their lives ſhine amongſt men glorious in holineſs, and reſembling God himſelf. And though a thouſand ſhould forſake this goſpel and become apoſtates, yet I can never part with it, while I feel the bleſſed effects abiding upon my heart; and I truſt, through the grace of God they ſhall abide for ever. What ſtrong engagements, O my ſoul, art thou under to maintain the profeſſion of this goſpel? How can I be aſhamed of my hope, my portion, my everlaſting all? Shall I be aſhamed of that goſpel upon which my ſalvation is founded, and my beſt and higheſt intereſt, even my expectations of endleſs felicity? If I let go this faith, if I loſe my hold of this goſpel, I let go my hold of Chriſt, of God, and his love; I let go my hold of heaven and all my happineſs; my ſins all return upon me with their unſufferable load of guilt and anguiſh of conſcience, if I

loſe my faith in this goſpel; for all my hope of pardon is built upon this foundation: heaven, with all the joys of it, vaniſh from my ſoul, if I part with this glorious goſpel of Chriſt, and death and hell face me with all their terrors.

A HYMN.

THIS is the word of truth and love
Sent to the nations from above;
Jehovah here reſolves to ſhew
What his almighty grace can do.

II.

This remedy did wiſdom find
To heal diſeaſes of the mind;
This ſovereign balm whoſe virtues can
Reſtore the ruined creature, man.

III.

The goſpel bids the dead revive;
Sinners obey the voice and live:

Dry bones are raiſed and cloathed
afreſh,
And hearts of ſtone are turned to fleſh.

IV.

Where Satan reigned in ſhade of
night,
The goſpel ſtrikes a heavenly light;
Our luſts it's wondrous power con-
trouls,
And calms the rage of angry ſouls.

V.

Lions and beaſts of ſavage name
Put on the nature of the lamb,
While the wide world eſteem it
ſtrange,
Gaze and admire, and hate the
change.

On the inward Witneſs to Chriſtianity.

1 John xv. 10.

He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witneſs in himſelf.

YES, O my ſoul, however ſome may ridicule this inward witneſs to Chriſtianity, it is a glorious reality, and belongs to every ſincere Chriſtian. He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witneſs in himſelf; for he hath within him the thing teſtified; he hath eternal life in himſelf: this life is already begun, and it ſhall be carried on and fulfilled in the days of eternity. Happineſs and holineſs are the principal ingredients of eternal life, and they are in ſome good meaſure found with every ſoul that believes in Chriſt. A Chriſtian, who has well ſtudied

he doctrines and proofs of Christi-
nity, can give sufficient reasons for
he truth of them. He finds what is
ufficiently satisfactory, to confirm
is belief in the outward testimonies,
n the miracles wrought in the world,
nd the prophecies fulfilled. I have,
ays he, in my understanding many
rguments and evidences of the truth
f the gospel; and my reason is
onvinced, that it is a divine reli-
gion: but there is a miracle wrought
n my heart, that is of more efficacy
han this, and is to me a more con-
vincing proof of the gospel of Christ.
Eternal life is begun in me. I find
my conscience, that was disturbed
with the guilt of sin, established in
peace, upon solid hopes of pardon.
I have an interest in the love of God,
nd lively sensations of that love; I
have a hatred of all sin; I live above
he world, and have a holy contempt
f the trifles, businesses, and cares of
his life; I delight in the company
f him that dwells in heaven; I find

in my ſoul that I love thoſe that are like him; I walk as ſeeing him who is inviſible; I have a zeal for his glory, and with active diligence I am employed for the honour of his name in the world. Theſe things I find wrought in me by the goſpel of Chriſt; the diſcoveries of the nature and works of God, by his goſpel, have filled my ſoul with holy wonder, and bowed my ſpirit down to adore him: the revelations of his amazing condeſcenſion and love have raiſed my heart to love him; the examples of ſuperlative piety I meet with in the goſpel have excited my holy imitations; and the motives propoſed here are ſo awful and ſo alluring, that all my powers of hope and fear are joined and engaged to conſtrain my obedience to the excellent and divine precepts of this religion. I feel that I am quite altered from what I once was; I am a new creature, and the change is divine and heavenly. There is ſome-

thing within me bears witneſs, that my religion is from God.

Though I am not able (may the Chriſtian ſay) to ſolve all the difficulties in the Bible, nor maintain the ſacred authority of it againſt the cavils of wit and learning, yet I am well aſſured, that the doctrines of this book are ſacred and divine; for when I heard and received them, they changed my nature, they ſubdued my ſinful appetites, and raiſed me from death to life; they made me love God above all things, and gave me a well grounded hope of his love: therefore I cannot doubt but that the chief principles of this book are heavenly and divine, though I cannot ſo well prove that the very words and ſyllables of it are ſo too; for it is the ſenſe of Scripture, and not the mere letters of it, on which I build my hope.

O what unknown millions of arguments would ſupport and adorn the doctrine of Chriſt, if every pro-

ſeſſor of it had this inward teſtimony working powerfully in the ſoul, and breaking forth in the life! How effectually would it ſilence the moſt impudent objectors!

Is it not time now to take a ſurvey of ourſelves, to look back upon our lives, and aſk what teſtimonies we have given to the glory of this goſpel, and the truth of the religion of Jeſus? Have we not ſometimes been rather ſcandals to Chriſtianity? Have not our practices been blots inſtead of evidences, and diſcouragements inſtead of allurements? This will be an awakening thought, and painful to conſcience in the review. Have we ourſelves this divine witneſs of our Chriſtianity? Have we eternal life wrought in our hearts? Have we derived peace of conſcience, and any hope of pardoning grace, by truſting in the Son of God? Have we found any ſatisfaction of ſoul in drawing near to God by Jeſus the Mediator? Do we find

incere love to God kindled in our ouls by the hope of his ſpecial fa-vour? Is there any thing of the holineſs and happineſs of the hea-venly ſtate begun in us? Have we an averſion to all ſin in ſome degree anſwerable to what the ſaints and angels have in heaven? Have we a holy contempt of this world? Do we live above it, as thoſe who are within ſight of eternal bleſſedneſs? Do we look down upon the tempt-ing vanities of this life with a ſacred diſdain, ſomething like thoſe who dwell on high in the full poſſeſſion of life eternal? Is there any ſimili-tude between our life and theirs, between our hearts and theirs? Do we delight in the worſhip of God? Is his preſence our joy? Is his en-joyment the object of our deſires? Are we zealous for his ſervice? Are our aims ſet for his glory? Are we active in the diſcharge of the duties that he hath appointed us, and the ſeveral provinces of ſervice that

he has ordained us to be engaged in in this world? How ſtand our hearts affected towards our fellow creatures? Do we love our neighbour, by dealing with him as we deſire he ſhould deal with us? Can we forgive our enemies? Do we rejoice in the welfare of others without envy, and take delight in the holineſs and peace of our fellow creatures, and give the poor and mean followers of Chriſt a large ſhare in our hearts and kindeſt affections? If this be the character and temper of our ſpirits, and this the conduct of our lives, then eternal life is begun in us; then may we ſay to our ſouls, this is the record that God hath given concerning his Son, that there is eternal life in him; and we are ſure we build our hopes on a ſolid foundation, for this life is already begun in our hearts, and the Spirit of God, who has begun this work, will carry it on, and make it perfect in the days of eternity. Amen.

A HYMN.

WITNESS, ye ſaints, that Chriſt is true;
Tell how his name imparts
The life of grace and glory too:
Ye have it in your hearts.

II.

The heavenly building is begun,
When ye receive the Lord;
His hands ſhall lay the crowning ſtone.
And well perform his word.

III.

Your ſouls are formed by Wiſdom's rules,
Your joys and graces ſhine;
You need no learning of the ſchools,
To prove your faith divine.

IV.

Let Heathens ſcoff, and Jews oppoſe,
Let Satan's bolts be hurl'd;
There's ſomething wrought within you ſhews
That Jeſus ſaves the world.

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God.

DEATH and life are words of a ſolemn and important ſound, and well calculated to awaken mankind to attention. All, in Scripture language, are ſaid to be dead, but in very different ſenſes.

Thoſe who are in a ſtate of nature, under the power of ſin, unpardoned and unſanctified, are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. Thoſe who are recovered from the fall, and brought into a ſtate of grace by the goſpel, are ſaid to be dead alſo; dead to ſin and dead to the world: but they have a new life, and that of a different kind; ſuch as is mentioned in the text. Let this hidden life be the matter of my meditations, and let me enquire into its nature. It is that whereby a man becomes a new creature, a Chriſtian indeed; his ſpiritual life wherein he is devoted to God, and

lives to the purpoſes of heaven and eternity. The Scripture calls this life eternal; for, the life of grace ſurvives the grave, and is fulfilled in heaven. It is a life of faith, holineſs and peace; a life of faith, or dependence upon God for all we want; a life of holineſs, rendering back again to God, in a way of honour and ſervice, whatſoever we receive from him in a way of mercy; and a life of peace in the comfortable ſenſe of the favour of God, and our acceptance with him through Jeſus Chriſt.

Let me enquire wherein the ſpiritual life is ſaid to be hidden.

The acts and exerciſes of it are ſacred, and unknown to the world. The ſaint is much engaged in the important and hidden concerns of his life, and his converſe is with God and Chriſt, who dwell in the world of inviſibles. Who knows the ſecret tranſactions between God and the ſoul of a Chriſtian, when he firſt en-

tered into covenant with God, through Christ the Mediator, and began this happy life? Who can tell the inward workings of his spirit towards Jesus Christ his Lord in the first efforts of his faith, and embraces of his Saviour? Who was acquainted with the secret sorrow of his soul, when he was first set a mourning for his sins, and humbled himself in bitterness before God? or who can express the surprising delight, and secret satisfaction he felt at heart, when God communicated to him the first lively hope of forgiveness and divine salvation? O the unknown joys of such an hour, which some Christians have experienced, when a divine beam of light shone into their souls, and revealed Jesus Christ within them; when they saw his all-sufficiency of righteousness and grace, to answer their infinite necessities, and when they durst believe in him as their Saviour!

While the world is following after

idols and vanity, the Chriſtian, in his ſecret chamber, breathes after his God and his Redeemer, and gives a looſe to his warmeſt affections, in the purſuit of his almighty Friend.

While the men of this world are vexing their ſpirits, and fretting under preſent diſappointments, he dwells in a loneſome corner, mourning over his ſins and follies. With what humble fear does he mention the name of God? With what deep ſelf-abaſement and inward adoration? At the preſence of ſin how is his anger ſtirred, and his holy watchfulneſs when temptations appear? How does he labour, fight and ſtrive, leſt he be overcome by the ſecret enemies of his ſoul? and as his bitterneſs of heart is unknown to the world, ſo a ſtranger intermeddleth not with his joy. He feeds on the ſame proviſion which his Saviour did on earth; for it is his meat and drink to do the will of his Father who is in heaven.

The word of God is the chief instrument whereby this divine life is wrought and supported in the soul; and this word hidden in the heart, secures the heart from sin.

Is it thus, O my soul, that the Christian life is hidden and unseen? Yet may it never be so secret as to be unknown to myself. O what a poor life, to go from year to year, and still complain, I know not whether I am alive or not? Surely if my own name were written in heaven, I should use my utmost endeavours to read the inscription myself, though it may be a secret to the rest of mankind. Then my God shall have the honour of this pardoning love, and then my soul shall enjoy the consolation. And though it be a hidden life, O my soul, be solicitous that the world may see the blessed effects of it, holding forth the word of life, and as far as possible, even by the best works to discover inward religion.

Is the Chriſtian life a hidden life, and am I content with the outward forms of religion? Have I no daily ſecret exerciſes of ſoul in retirement and converſe with God? No time ſpent with my own heart? Am I never buſied in ſome hidden corner about the affairs of eternity? Nothing to do with God alone in a whole day together? Surely this can never be the life of a Chriſtian.

The men of this world may wonder what the Chriſtian can have to ſay to God in ſo many retiring hours; but the ſaint, in a lively frame, thinks all little enough to tranſact affairs of ſuch awful importance, as he has to do with God; and little enough to enjoy thoſe ſecret pleaſures, which the ſtranger is unacquainted with. Alas! they know not that the life of a Chriſtian is on high; they know nothing of our earneſt enquiries after an abſent God and a hidden Saviour.

May I never forget that the ſecret

life of a Christian grows much in the closet; and that I have often found, by melancholy experience, that if the secret chamber is abandoned, the spiritual life will decay. May I be afraid of every thing that grieves the blessed Spirit of Christ, who is the principle of this life, and may provoke him to retire: be ever watchful and jealous of every thing that would call my thoughts outward, and keep them too long abroad. Christians should live much at home, for theirs is a hidden life.

How glorious, O my soul, is the difference between the spiritual life of the Christian on earth, and the perfection of eternal life in heaven; when faith shall be turned into sight, and hope into enjoyment; patience into joy and victory, and love into its own perfection! Then all the hidden virtues and graces of the saints shall appear like the stars at midnight in an unclouded sky. Then shall it be made known to all the

world, that these were the men who wept and prayed in secret; who wrestled hard with their secret sins; who sought the face of God and his strength in their secret chambers, and they are made more than conquerors, through him that loved them. The poor trembling Christian, who lived this hidden life, but scarce knew it himself, shall then lift up his head and rejoice; and the hidden seed, that was watered with so many secret tears, shall spring up into a rich and illustrious harvest. This is the day which shall bring to light a thousand works of hidden piety, for the eternal honour of Christ and his saints. And with what astonishment shall the Christian behold those divine honours which Jesus, the Judge, shall cast upon his poor secret services and sufferings? And was this the crown, shall he say, for which I fought on earth at so poor and feeble a rate? This the prize for which I ran with a pace so slow

and lazy? Were these the glories which I sought with so cold and indifferent a zeal in yonder world? O shameful indifference! O surprising glories! O undeserved prize and crown! Had I imagined how bright the blessing was, which lay hidden in the promise, surely all my powers would have been animated to a warmer pursuit. Could I have seen what I ought to have believed; had I but taken in all that was told me concerning this glorious and eternal life, surely I should have ventured through many deaths to secure the possession of it. O guilty negligence! O criminal unbelief! But thy sovereign mercy, O my God, has pardoned both, and made me possessor of the fair inheritance. Behold, I bow at thy feet for ever, and adore the riches of overflowing grace, Amen.

A HYMN.

O HAPPY ſoul, that lives on high,
While men lie groveling here;
His hopes are fixed above the ſky,
And faith forbids his fear.

II.

His conſcience knows no ſecret ſtings,
While grace and joy combine
To form a life, whoſe holy ſprings
Are hidden and divine.

III.

He waits in ſecret on his God;
His God in ſecret ſees:
Let earth be all in arms abroad,
He dwells in heavenly peace.

IV.

His pleaſures riſe from things unſeen,
Beyond this world and time,
Where neither eyes nor ears have been,
Nor thoughts of mortal climb.

V.

He looks to heaven's eternal hills,
To meet that glorious day;
Dear Lord how flow thy chario
wheels!
How long is thy delay!

On the right Improvement o Life.

1 Cor. iii. 22.

Whether life or death, all are yours.

IT is a large and fair inheritance that belongs to the children of God: they have no need to divide themselves into little parties, and to quarrel about their interest in one minister or another, in one blessing or another; for whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas; whether life or death; all things are theirs. I would now confine my meditations to the

enefit for which life is designed to
ne Christian.

Life is ours, for it is the time
iven for reconciliation to God and
ecuring our everlasting interest. We
ll had our conversation in times
ast in the lusts of our flesh; and
were by nature children of wrath,
even as others. Now this life is the
ime given us to seek deliverance
rom the wrath to come, and to fly
o the hope set before us. We are
defiled and guilty creatures; this is
the hour of cleansing, while the foun-
tain of the blood of Jesus stands
open to wash us from sin and un-
cleanness; we are by nature utterly
unfit for heaven and all the works
and joys of it; now is the time to
acquire a meetness for the inheri-
tance in light through the sanctifying
influence of the blessed Spirit.

O what infinite advantage has it
been to Christians, that they have
enjoyed this golden hour of grace,
and improved it well! What had

become of me, O my ſoul, if I ha
been arreſted ſome years ago by th
meſſenger of death, and hurried awa
into eternity! Where would hav
been my portion, had I been ſen
down to the grave in the midſt o
my ſins, before I was awakened o
convinced of my folly and danger
before I had felt inward religion, o
had been acquainted with Jeſus, tha
bought and beſtows forgiveneſs?
What infinite honours are due to the
patience and long ſuffering of my
God, and to the mercy and media-
tion of Jeſus my Saviour.—Glory
be to divine patience for life pro-
longed, and (O may I not hope) a
ſinner ſaved!

Life is ours, as it is our opportu-
nity of doing much ſervice for Chriſt,
and manifeſting our gratitude for his
redeeming love. Here on earth we
may ſpeak of the wonders of his
grace, that has ſaved us, and publiſh
his love that is unſpeakable. Here
our lips and tongues may be delight-

fully employed in declaring what we have tasted of the blessings of the gospel, and call others to taste and see that the Lord is good. Here we may make it known, for the support of poor convinced sinners that are ready to despair, what heights, lengths, breadths, and depths there are in the love of Christ; for it reached our souls even at the borders of hell. It rises high, for it has lifted our hopes to heaven, and it stretches its sweet and sovereign influence beyond the length of time, and provides for our life a happiness that shall measure out eternity. This is the proper work of the living saint, to make known to sinners the grace of salvation.

Life is ours, for it allows many a proper season for giving examples of holiness to mankind; herein we become followers and imitators of the blessed Jesus: he is the first pattern, the most glorious example:

by this means we pay great and juſt honours to the bleſſed goſpel.

Life is ours, for it gives opportunity for abounding in good works to the benefit of mankind: every day opens ſome new ſcenes, wherein we may be ſerviceable to our neighbours, our relatives, and fellow creatures; and ſo making the world the better for us. The days and years of life ſhould be numbered by the multitude of good works, as much as by the revolutions of the ſun and moon. O it is a mean and pitiful thing, only to be old in time, and not in duties to God or benefits to men!

How many, alas! are mere cumberers of the ground! ſuch ſhould never pretend to the name of Chriſtian. Remember, O my ſoul, it was thy bleſſed Lord's character, that he went about doing good! O may our Saviour be our pattern, and let us be followers of the holy Jeſus. What a noble pattern! Alas! what ſlow and diſtant followers!

Life is ours, for it affords means for brightening our evidences for heaven, improving our preparations for glory. Surely we are not willing to depart from this world, till we have good hope of a better ſtate, and comfortable expectation that it ſhall be well with us for ever. Does God prolong our days on earth? Let us ſee then that the principles of piety and goodneſs be well rooted in our hearts; and that our graces grow up under the influences of heaven.—See that they bud and bloſſom with fair flowers, to the honour of our profeſſion, and to the joy of our own conſciences.—Let us ſhine brighter in holineſs every day of our mortal life, and bring forth fruits meet for life everlaſting, that we may know and be aſſured, that the ſeeds of glory are ſown within us; ſuch divine ſeeds as will bear a rich and bleſſed harveſt in the great day.—Let it be ſaid concerning me, O my ſoul, that I ſenſibly approach nearer

to heaven every month of my continuance upon earth; and that I look more like the inhabitants of that upper world, by how much the longer I continue in this lower ſtate; that when I depart hence, I may be aſſured of a joyful admiſſion into Paradiſe! May my graces ſhine ſo bright, and my evidences for heaven appear ſo glorious and unconteſted, that there may be no tremblings about my heart in that ſolemn and important hour, but that I may find the gates of glory open before me; and that I may ſee my way clear through the dark valley, and have rich and abundant entrance into the kingdom of my God on high!

Life is ours, that by a due improvement of it, our crown of glory may be enlarged, and our ſeat advanced in heaven. O it is a bleſſed thing to multiply good inſtructions and counſels, and exemplary practices of holineſs, and to hear of them after we have gone to heaven, that

they ſtill yield on earth a further crop and harveſt of honour to Chriſt and profit to men: ſuch tidings as theſe cannot but raiſe and advance our joy.

What a rich advantage is put into the hands of a young convert, when a ſinner in his youngeſt years is changed into a ſaint? What a bleſſed privilege is granted him by divine grace, and what a glorious opportunity is offered him, the improvement whereof may reach to everlaſting ages! Happy ſoul, who art reconciled to God betimes! a thouſand ſins in the following courſe of thy life are hereby prevented! Happy ſoul, to whom Chriſt has manifeſted his love in the beginning of life, and ſaved thee betimes from eternal death! Awaken all thy thoughts; conſult, contrive, and ſeek divine advice; what thou ſhalt do for his honour, who hath given thee ſo early a ſalvation. Pray, O my ſoul, for the bleſſed Spirit to mark

out the paths of thy feet, and to employ thy head, thy hands, and thy tongue, in the moſt honourable manner for thy God, and the moſt uſeful for the good of men. Remember every hour of thy time is a part of thy treaſure; God, even thy God, expects a daily revenue of glory, as the juſt improvement of this treaſure. Let a holy zeal be kindled within thee, to do glorious ſervice for thy Creator and Saviour; let a pious ambition ſet all thy powers at work, to do ſome uncommon good for men, and to be made an extenſive bleſſing to all that are near thee.—Ariſe and ſhine as a fair example of holineſs in a dark and wicked world; and let every year of life brighten thy character on earth, and enlarge thy reward in heaven.—Then ſhall it appear that life is thine, in the ſweeteſt ſenſe, when every ſtage and period of it ſhall add new honours to the name of thy God, give new bleſſings

to the world, and advance the joys of thy own eternity.

And is this life the only ſpace given me to be reconciled to God, and am I ſtill a ſtranger and an enemy? Have I waſted away ſo many years of this golden ſeaſon of hope, this day of grace, and have I not yet received this mercy, nor laid hold on the hope ſet before me? Search, examine, inquire, what is thy ſtate, O my ſoul; and if thou art yet a child of wrath, and unreconciled to God, make haſte and fly for refuge to the grace of the goſpel; let no more days of thy life paſs away in ſuch a dangerous and dreadful ſtate, leſt life ſhould come to a ſpeedy period, and then thou art baniſhed from grace and hope for ever. But if the character of a ſincere penitent be found with thee, then bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, that he has not cut me off in the days of my enmity to God, unſanctified and unpardoned. That he has lengthened out my

life, and the seasons of his mercy, till he has changed my sinful nature, and secured me in the covenant of his grace. Is life given me as an opportunity of service to my Lord Jesus? It is he that has redeemed me; it is he that has laid out his valuable life for me. What shall I do, O my Saviour, to make some humble returns of acknowledgment and love! O let my useless and unserviceable years be all forgotten, and let the remnant of life, whether longer or shorter, be all devoted to the interest and honour of my Redeemer. Were it possible for the saints, after they had dwelt some time in heaven, to come down and dwell on earth again, how would they multiply their labours, and lay out their new life in more activity and service for their God and Saviour? When they have found and tasted what a heaven of happiness succeeds the short labours of this life, how would they double all their zeal and dili-

gence, and be grieved they could do no more? When they have converſed with their beloved Lord, and beheld him face to face, with how much warmer love would they engage in his ſervice? Think of this, O my ſoul, and remember, if ever thou arriveſt ſafe at heaven, thou wilt wiſh thou hadſt done more for thy beloved Lord here on earth.

Is this life continued to me, that I may ſpread a ſavour of piety amongſt my fellow creatures? Lord ſuffer me to do nothing that may lead ſinners aſtray from thee; pardon all the evil examples I have ever given, and let my future conduct ſhine in holineſs. Methinks I would convince the world, that religion has ſomething excellent and divine in it, and encourage them to the practice of ſtrict godlineſs. Is life prolonged to me, that I may be ſerviceable to mankind, and have I lived thus long to ſo little purpoſe? Though my goodneſs extends not unto thee, O

Lord, yet I entreat that my fellow creatures may be the better for me, while I continue among them. O may the God of Abraham beſtow upon me that rich favour which Abraham received in thoſe divine words of promiſe: "I will bleſs thee and will make thee a bleſſing." Have my days been prolonged thus far, that my hopes of heaven might be daily increaſing, that my evidences of adoption might grow ſtronger daily, and my ſoul be more prepared for heaven? Look inward, O my ſoul; haſt thou acquired a more divine and heavenly temper than in years paſt? Art thou wrought up to a greater meetneſs for the inheritance on high? Are thy deſires, thy appetites, and all thy powers more fitted for the buſineſs of heaven, and attempered to the bleſſedneſs of the upper world? Art thou growing fitter ſtill for the ſight of God, for converſe with Chriſt, for the company of ſaints and angels? How are

thy days and months run to waſte, if thou art ſo much nearer death, and yet art not ſo much riper for heaven?—And is it poſſible that life ſhould be ſo improved, as that my crown of glory and portion of happineſs may be enlarged hereafter? Let my holy ambition awake at ſuch a hint as this.—Though it is the blood of my Redeemer that has purchaſed all the prizes and crowns in heaven, yet if I am a ſwift runner in the chriſtian race, I am fitted to receive the fairer prize: and if I am an active and victorious ſoldier in the army of Chriſt, and have ſerved faithfully, through a tedious war, I may have reaſon to hope for a brighter crown. We may humbly wait for a reward in proportion to the work, according to the encouragement of the Bible, while we ſtill acknowledge, that it is free ſovereign grace, that both enables us to hold out working, and beſtows the rich reward. Amen.

A HYMN.

AND is this life prolonged to me?
Are days and ſeaſons given?
And ſhall I not prepare to be
A fitter heir for heaven?

II.

I'll never let theſe moments paſs,
Theſe golden hours be gone;
Lord, I accept thy offered grace,
And bow before thy throne.

III.

Now cleanſe my ſoul from every ſin,
By my Redeemer's blood;
Now let my fleſh and heart begin
The honours of my God.

IV.

Let me no more my ſoul defile
With ſin's deceitful toys;
Let cheerful hope increaſing ſtill,
Approach to heavenly joys.

V.

My thankful lips ſhall loud proclaim
The wonders of thy praiſe;
And ſpread the ſavour of thy name,
Where'er I ſpend my days.

VI.

On earth let my example ſhine,
And when I leave this ſtate,
May heaven receive this ſoul of mine
To bliſs divinely great.

Pſalm lxv. 4.

Bleſſed is the man whom thou chuſeſt, and cauſeſt to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts.

IT was an elegant addreſs that the queen of Sheba made to Solomon, when ſhe had ſurveyed the magnificence of his court, and had heard his wiſdom; 'Happy are 'thy men, and happy are theſe thy 'ſervants who ſtand continually before thee!' But the harp of David

ſtrikes a diviner note, "Bleſſed is the man whom thou chuſeſt, O God, that he may approach and dwell in thy courts, in the holy ſanctuary!" I would now endeavour to meditate upon this doctrine, which ſeems naturally drawn from the text.—That nearneſs to God is the foundation of a creature's happineſs.

And is it thus, O my ſoul! what unknown evil then is contained in the nature of every ſin, for it divides the creature from God and happineſs! It may be ſaid to every ſoul on earth, as it was once ſaid to Iſrael, "Your iniquities have ſeparated between you and your God." O what tongue can expreſs, or what heart can conceive, the immenſe load and everlaſting train of miſchiefs and miſeries that lie heavy on poor mankind, and have purſued human nature, in all the infinite members and branches of it, through all ages and nations, for almoſt ſix thouſand

years.—All these were introduced by man's first disobedience: we came into the world estranged from God, and go astray from the womb. It is the spirit and temper of mankind, by nature to desire an absence from God, and to wish their own misery. By nature we love him not, nor do we seek after his love: these are our deplorable circumstances, and yet we go on to aggravate our own guilt, to run farther from God hourly, and to make haste to everlasting wretchedness, if divine grace prevent us not.—Is nearness to God the foundation of the creature's felicity? Then how vain are all pretences to happiness, while man is a stranger to God! Let him be surrounded with all imaginable delights of sense, or let him be furnished with every advantage to entertain the mind; yet, if he be afar off from God, he must be afar off from blessedness: without God and without hope, is the character of the sinful world. They who ne-

ver drew near to God, who never saw God in his works or in his word, so as to love him above all things, and partake of his love, must be miserable, in spite of all their pretences: they that are far from God shall perish. God hath not utterly abandoned this world to sin and misery, while he keeps his word and ordinances in it; for these are his appointed means of approaching to him; and steps whereby we may climb to the blessedness of saints and angels. God is ever sending messengers of peace, and invitations of love to a ruined and rebellious world. Happy sinners, who hear the voice of an inviting God, who turn their back upon the perishing vanities of life and time, who forsake the creature, and return to their Creator again! thousands of the sons and daughters of Adam have accepted the messages of this grace, and have been by these methods trained up for glory, by conversing with

God in his ordinances, and dwelling in his courts on earth; they have been happily prepared for an everlasting habitation in his court of heaven.

The true value of things on earth may be judged of, and determined, by their tendency to bring us near to God and heaven. If our judgment be set right in this point, and we are convinced that an approach to God is the way to be happy, then whatsoever leads us nearest to God will rise in value in our esteem. Then our hearts will set a high esteem on those friends or relatives, who draw us to the knowledge and love of God: then we shall prize the ministrations of the gospel in England, above the riches of both the Indies: then we shall not think the ministry of the word a mean and contemptibl employment; nor delight to hear scandals thrown on the persons or characters of those who are engaged in it; for these are the servants of the living God, who shew us the way to

be happy. Then ſhall we commend thoſe ſermons and thoſe writings moſt, which we feel and find to draw our hearts furtheſt off from ſin and the creature, and bring them neareſt to God: and then, if there were but one Bible in the world, we ſhould all agree to ſay there is not treaſure enough in all the material creation to purchaſe it out of our hands. Do I find, O my ſoul, that the world begins to creep into my heart? Do I find any creature ſit too near my ſoul, and take up any of that room and time which God ſhould have there?——Awake betimes and beſtir thyſelf, leſt it divide thee from thy happineſs. When I feel my ſpirits at any time grow cold in religious worſhip, when I can paſs a day with an indifference about ſecret converſe with God, and be content to be long abſent from him; then would I ſearch with diligence what enemy it is that has crept in ſecretly and interpoſes betwixt God and me; and

when I have found it, I would never reſt till, by the aids of divine grace, I have removed the idol from my thoughts, and my ſoul be reſtored to its holy nearneſs to God again.

Wanderings and vain thoughts in the time of religious worſhip are the great burdens of a child of God; for they clog him, and keep him down, when he ſhould riſe to his heavenly father. They are bars in his way to bleſſedneſs, for they hinder his approach to God. What holy ſhame and repentance ſhould it work in us, to think that even in the place where the great and bleſſed God comes to ſhew his face, we ſhould be building up walls and partitions to hide his face from us! that we ſhould turn away from him, when he comes on purpoſe to meet us! O let us give glory to God, the great and holy God, that he ſhould be ever willing to let ſinners approach him, that the Majeſty of heaven and the ſupreme Lord of all, who had been highly

provoked by his rebellious creature, ſhould ever come into terms of reconciliation; that he himſelf ſhould provide a ſacrifice: this divine condeſcenſion, O my ſoul, demands thy worſhip and thy wonder!

Stand ſtill here, O ye ſaints of the Moſt High, and ſurvey your privileges and your honours; and remember that whenſoever you draw near to God, in the courts of his houſe, it was Jeſus who drew near firſt; it is Jeſus who ſtill dwells near, to make you acceptable; it is Jeſus, who by his Spirit lifts you up near to the Father, and it is by his beſt beloved and deareſt Son, that God the Father draws near to all his children.

Happy perſons! who are weary of their own eſtrangement from God, who have heard, and have received the offers of his mercy! who have made their ſolemn approaches to God by Jeſus, the Mediator, and are joined to the Lord in a ſweet

and everlasting covenant!—Happy creatures, who behold the beauties of their Maker's face with double pleasure, who love him with all their souls, and begin to taste the love of his heart too! O that sinners would be brought to believe, that there are divine pleasures in religion, and joys which the stranger intermeddles not with! O that they would once be convinced that happiness consists in approaching to God! What a sacred and superior pleasure it is, above all the joys of sense, to love the great and blessed God, and to know that he loves me! To walk all the day in the light of his countenance, to have him near me as a counsellor, whose advice I may ask in every difficulty of life; to be ever near him as my guard, and to fly from every danger to the wing of his protection; to have such an almighty friend with me, in sickness and sorrow, and ready to receive my departing spirit into the arms of his love.

There are degrees of bleſſedneſs among the ſaints on earth. Bleſſed is every ſoul whoſe ſtate and nature are changed, who is not a ſtranger but a ſon; but more bleſſed are thoſe ſons who are moſt like their heavenly Father, and keep cloſeſt to him in all their ways.—Bleſſed are they above others in the holy family, who ſeldom wander from their God; whoſe hearts are always in a heavenly frame, and whoſe virtues and graces brighten and improve daily, and make a continual and joyful advance towards the ſtate of glory. To ſeek after God, and endeavour to approach, in all his own inſtitutions, is the way to be recovered from the miſeries of the fall; to live in a holy nearneſs to God, is a reſtoration to the pleaſures of innocency; it is the full happineſs of reaſonable creatures to be always with God; it is our nobleſt honour and ſweeteſt conſolation, in this ſtate of darkneſs and trial, to get as near him as earth and

grace will admit; and it is alſo the beſt preparative for heaven and the ſtate of glory, where we ſhall dwell for ever near him, and be for ever bleſſed. Amen.

A HYMN.

ARE theſe the happy perſons here
Who dwell the neareſt to their God?
Has God invited ſinners near,
And Jeſus bought this grace with blood?

II.

Go then, my ſoul, addreſs the Son,
To lead thee near the Father's face;
Gaze on his glories yet unknown,
And taſte the bleſſings of his grace.

III.

Vain vexing world, and fleſh and ſenſe,
Retire while I approach my God;
Nor let my ſins divide me hence,
Nor creatures tempt my thoughts abroad.

IV.

While to thine arms my God I preſs,
No mortal hope, nor joy, nor fear,
Shall call my ſoul from thine em-
brace;
'Tis heaven to dwell for ever there.

Pſalm xliii. 2.

When ſhall I come and appear before God?

THE holy Pſalmiſt was now abſent from his uſual place of public worſhip, and reſtrained from coming near to the ark of God; reflecting upon what he had enjoyed heretofore, and what he was deprived of, he breaks out into a rapture, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God!" The ſenſe of the whole pſalm is as it were drawn up into theſe few words: "When ſhall I come and appear before God?"

David well knew that the great end of appointing public worſhip was that there might be a communication between God and man, who were ſo dreadfully ſeparated by ſin: he knew the gracious promiſe, that where God recorded his name, there would he come and meet his people, and bleſs them.—And have not Chriſtians, under the goſpel, as great reaſon to expect the ſpecial preſence of God among them in his ordinances? Have we not an expreſs promiſe of Chriſt himſelf, That where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midſt of them? And have not his people enjoyed bleſſed experience of his preſence in his ſanctuary, in the aſſembly of his ſaints? One can ſay, I was all darkneſs, and ignorance, and there I found divine light diſcovering to me my ſin and miſery, and his ſalvation: another can ſay, I was dead in ſin, and found my ſoul raiſed to a divine life: there I was

mourning and deſpairing, and there I found a word of ſupport and holy joy, ſuch as no mere word of men could convey unto me.—And I was forced to confeſs, that God was in this place of a truth.

Let us guard againſt hypocriſy in divine worſhip, becauſe it is an appearing before God.—We do then in effect ſay to God, O Lord, we are always in thy ſight; but in a ſpecial manner we now come to ſhew thee our hearts, to acquaint thee humbly with our wants, our ſorrows, and our ſins, our deſires and hopes. God is a ſpirit, and will be worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth; he ſees through our ſouls, and knows the ends and deſigns of our coming, whether to ſee creatures, and to be ſeen of them, or to ſee himſelf our Creator.—O what pains ought we to take to put on the beſt ornaments of the mind, to ſee that our graces all ſhine, when we are to ſtand before God!

What everlasting thanks are due to our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath made way for our appearance before God with comfort and hope.

Let us consider a little what God is, and what we are, that we may have a due sense of the necessity of Christ: we may say to ourselves, I am going to appear before the great and glorious God, a God of infinite perfection; and I am a little vessel of mere imperfection and infirmity. What shall I do to appear in his sight? He is a God of spotless holiness, and I am defiled with a thousand sins; who shall make me appear lovely in his sight? He is a God of inflexible justice, and I a guilty wretch, a criminal already condemned; who shall plead for me, and obtain a pardon?

In Christ alone can we appear well pleasing to God; he, who once appeared with sin imputed, was made sin for us, and was treated as a sinner in the world for our sakes, now

appears before God, without ſin, in heaven, as our great high prieſt, to make us acceptable to God there; nor ſhall our warmeſt devotions, or our higheſt praiſes, dare to appear there without him.

And as this is the only appointed way for ſinners to appear before God, ſo it has been the ſweet experience of ten thouſand ſouls, that they have drawn near to God in this manner, with acceptance and delight. Many a child of God can ſay, when I had the firſt ſight of my guilt, and defilement, and beheld God in the terrors of his holineſs and juſtice, I was affrighted at the thoughts of appearing before him; every threatening that I heard, I thought it was pronounced againſt me; nor could I delight myſelf in the bleſſings of the goſpel, for they were not mine. But when he was pleaſed to lead and draw me to Chriſt, I ſaw ſuch an all-ſufficiency of atonement and righteouſneſs in him, that would anſwer

all the demands that divine juſtice had upon me. I joyfully accepted of this ſalvation; I ſurrendered myſelf, as the ſubject of his ſaving grace; and though I now behold myſelf ſtill defiled and ſinful, yet I humbly dare appear before him daily and hourly; for Jeſus is my interceſſor, he is my propitiation, and my God ſits upon a mercy-ſeat, ſprinkled with the blood of this heavenly ſacrifice; with humble penitence and with a lively faith, I draw near to a reconciled God, and give eternal thanks to the reconciler.

What a bleſſing it is to have ſo many houſes of God in the nation where we dwell, and thoſe houſes of God near us; we need not travel ſo far as the Jews, three times every year, to public worſhip; and yet they went from ſtrength to ſtrength till they appeared before God in Zion. How far ſome poor creatures come even in this iſland, many miles from

their own habitations, to appear before God and his ordinances; but God ſeats his throne as it were at our doors. How very different are they from the temper of David, who enjoy public ordinances continually, and are weary of them? The reaſon of this temper prevailing ſo much is, that the greater part have nothing of Chriſtianity beſides the mere name; and others perhaps, who have a ſenſe of religion, yet cannot look upon God any otherwiſe than as their enemy; and ſo they come before him without any love or delight in his company, and then no wonder they are weary of it. They would be well enough pleaſed, if they could live for ever in this world, and never have any thing to do with God. Their chief motive is the fear of hell; and therefore they drudge on in toilſome and undelightful religion; and indeed there is one reaſon why ſo many true Chriſtians feel no more longings after God, either in

public or private worſhip; becauſe though they have ſome cold hope, yet they are contented to abide in this ſtate of uncertainty, without joy or aſſurance, and do not make it their buſineſs to advance in Chriſtianity. They cannot rejoice in God as their father or their friend, with a lively ſoul, and they find but little pleaſure in his houſe.—But it is a divine pleaſure, and akin to heaven, when a child of God, with a lively faith and joyful ſpirit, comes before God as his God, and entertains himſelf with all the bleſſed diſcoveries that he makes of his wiſdom and grace in his churches, with all the promiſes of the covenant, with all the words of love that God hath written in his book, or publiſhes in his ordinances by the miniſtry of men: he feeds upon heavenly proviſions in his Father's houſe; and when he departs, he maintains on his ſoul a ſweet ſavor of heaven.—

But, alas! there is a great withdrawment of the ſpirit of God from his churches; a deadneſs of heart has ſeized believers in our day, and they grow carnal. O let us pray that the Spirit may return to the ſanctuary again!

O what unhappy clogs theſe fleſhly ſinful bodies are to the mind! How they contradict the beſt inclinations of the ſoul, and forbid it to fulfil its ſpiritual deſires; the ſoul would appear often before God, but the fleſh forbids; the ſoul wreſtles and ſtrives againſt the infirmities of the fleſh, and labours hard to abide with God; but theſe very wreſtlings and ſtrivings overcome languiſhing nature. Thus we are dragged down from the mount of converſe with God, and the ſoul who is akin to angels, and employed in their work, muſt deſcend and lie idle, to refreſh the animal. Sometimes, through drowſineſs and want of natural ſpirits, we grow ſtupid and heavy in religious

uties; and have but little ſenſe of hat God, before whom we ſtand: ſometimes, through exceſs of natural ſpirits, our imagination grows vain and fluttering, and wanders far away from the God we worſhip: if we fix our thoughts one minute upon things of the higheſt importance, the next flying idea catches the mind away, and it is loſt from God and devotion again. We appear before God twenty times in an hour, our eyes and our ears are conſtant witneſſes of this painful weakneſs, and unhappy inſtruments they are to draw off our ſouls from the divineſt meditation. Every thing around us is ready to diſturb and divert our feeble nature, in the moſt heavenly acts of worſhip. Poor broken worſhip! poor frail ſtate of human nature! But there is a bleſſed aſſembly of better worſhippers above. Awake our faith and deſire to join them! and let each of us ſay, O when ſhall

I go to that bright company, and appear amongſt them before God!

When ſhall I come and appear before God?

I WOULD now enlarge a little in my meditations, upon the difference of a Chriſtian's appearing before God in heaven, and his appearance in divine ordinances before God on earth. Here ſincere ſouls and hypocrites meet together in worſhip; there the hypocrite is for ever baniſhed. The children of God here are under a vail of infirm and ſinful fleſh, and in the likeneſs of ſinners; there they are unvailed, and acknowledged to be the ſons and daughters of the Almighty: here the child of God in the ſanctuary is deeply humbled at the mention of the name of God, but his humility is not ſeen; here his zeal kindles at the propoſal

of a duty, but it burns with an hidden flame.—We are ready to complain here, that we ourſelves know not whether we ſhall be accepted or not: through the weakneſs of our faith, want of holineſs, decay of zeal in our ſpirits, and that degeneracy we ſometimes feel in ourſelves, we are often ready to doubt, and on the borders of deſpair.—But there every one ſhall worſhip with ſtrength of joy, livelieſt delight, and warmeſt zeal of affection; and, be aſſured, his graces are true, for he ſhall ſee them all in the light of glory.—This ſuſpicion or jealouſy of ourſelves, flattens our devotion many a time here; but there a full aſſurance of our being beloved of God, and being for ever accepted of him, ſhall make every exerciſe of devotion agreeable and perfect pleaſure.—O, my ſoul, how ſhould it quicken thy race, and exalt thy joy, to think how faſt thou art removing from this world of ſinners, and from all

thy own doubts and fears, to a glorious assembly of holy souls, where not one doubt or fear shall remain in their consciences or in thine.—Now we worship in a way of preparation, there of enjoyment and full delight.—Ordinances here are but light shadows and very faint resemblances of what the worship in heaven shall be. Our business now in this world is to get a right temper and frame, there to practise and indulge the joy.—Happy souls, who are thus prepared in the outer courts to draw nigh and worship within the vail!—Now we appear with imperfect services, and poor improvements; there with glorious and complete worship.—What are our prayers or praises here, in comparison with those that are paid to God above? God and Christ are too much forgotten, or they are too often thrust out of our minds by vain thoughts.—Even when we ourselves are never so desirous to spend an

hour or two with God, what interruptions do we find? What long blanks divide the ſeveral petitions of our prayers, and break off the meditation while we ſtand before God to worſhip him?—There ſhall be everlaſting worſhip above, without one impertinence interpoſing; no trifles there to divert and ſeparate one part of our worſhip from the other.—There all the powers and faculties of nature ſhall be perpetually engaged in the buſineſs and bleſſedneſs of that ſtate. Glorious worſhip, and bleſſed worſhippers, fit for the preſence of the Majeſty of heaven!—

We come now with very little comfort, and many diſcouragements, to appear before God on earth, but there with everlaſting conſolation—Now we are defiled with guilt, and aſhamed to lift up our faces towards heaven, and bluſh even when our hearts are never ſo ſincere: but there we ſhall come near to God, even in

glory, and not be afraid of him, our garments washed white in the blood of the Lamb, and never to be defiled again—Now we worship with prayers and tears, because of many and heavy burdens, sorrows and sins; but then with everlasting songs and joy on our heads. If we had a painful and lively sense of these things, of the wanderings, temptations, burdens and defilements, that mingle with our worship here, we should cry aloud, and say, How long, O Lord, how long!—Now we appear and depart again, but there we shall abide with God. Now we go down from the mount of converse with God, into the world of temptation and sin, business and care. In this valley of tears we must have a conflict, before we get to the promised land; there every worshipper has in his hand a palm of victory—Let us raise our hope, our consolation, and our joy, by a meditation of such future worship in heaven as this is,

when we lie under many weakneſſes, reſtraints, and defilements, in our beſt worſhip on earth!—O how would this hope rejoice our hearts, if we could but live upon it! What ſacred comfort would it be to a poor humble ſoul, who is hindered from drawing near to God in worſhip now, becauſe his affections are perpetually ready to wander, to think that he ſhall come and appear before God hereafter, and ſee him without ceaſing, and his thoughts ſhall never wander from his God!—When he complains under the temptations of Satan, and abſence of God from his ordinances, what a pleaſure to think he is going above, to worſhip at the general aſſembly, where Satan never enters, and where God never conceals himſelf, but appears univerſally gracious, and without a frown; where the God of glory and mercy appears unchangeably and for ever the ſame!—

O, my ſoul, ever maintain a holy

jealouſy of thyſelf, leſt thou ſhouldeſt be miſſing at the great day, when the reſt of the aſſembly with which thou haſt been uſed to worſhip here, ſhall be worſhipping with the ſaints in heaven! Shall I be ſeparated from them with whom I have ſo often appeared before God, and bowed the knee together on earth? O dreadful thought of overwhelming ſorrow! Which of us all has ſo much ſtupidity as to bear the terrible apprehenſion! to be divided for ever from the family of God, and ſhut out of his upper ſanctuary! O may theſe thoughts make a proper impreſſion on our hearts, to keep our jealouſy awake, and ſpur us onward in our Chriſtian courſe of duty and devotion! May we be excited to give all diligence to make our calling and election ſure, and in every act of worſhip here in this world, to get ſome clearer evidences of an intereſt in the favour of God, ſome further meetneſs for glory; that when

when the great aſſembly ſhall join together in that heavenly worſhip, we may aſſiſt with our praiſes, and mingle our joy with theirs. Amen.

A HYMN.

WHILE I am baniſhed from thy houſe,
I mourn in ſecret, Lord:
" When ſhall I come, and pay my vows,
" And hear thy holy word?"

II.

So while I dwell in bonds of clay,
Methinks my ſoul ſhall groan,
" When ſhall I wing my heavenly way,
" And ſtand before thy throne?"

III.

I love to ſee my Lord below,
His church diſplays his grace;
But upper worlds his glory know,
And view Him face to face.

IV.

I love to worſhip at his feet,
Tho' ſin attack me there;
But ſaints exalted near his ſeat,
Have no aſſaults to fear.

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1 Cor. xvi. 13.

Stand faſt, quit you like men, be ſtrong.

IN the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, the profeſſors of the goſpel had great need of divine courage, that they might ſtand the many ſhocks of oppoſition, reproach and violence. But there are many things occurring in the divine life that require us likewiſe to put on this holy fortitude of ſoul; the lives of men are ſo corrupt and vicious, their hearts are ſo averſe to the holy precepts of Chriſtianity, the multitude of ſinners is ſo exceeding great in every nation, even where the goſpel is preached, and the

malice and rage of Satan, with his evil angels, are so constant and so violent against the religion and the name of Christ, that it is true at all times, as well as in the primitive age, that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. Our business therefore is to seek for a spirit of power and holy fortitude, that we may be void of fear in the profession of our faith, and in the practice of our daily duties: not the Corinthians only, but we also must watch, and stand fast in the faith; we must quit ourselves like men, and be strong. And besides the difficulties we shall meet with from a degenerate and sinful world; there are many other trials that attend the Christian life; sorrows and suffering belong to human nature in this fallen and unhappy state; this earth is designed for a stage of conflict, a scene of probation, each of us must act our parts under the eye and notice of God, our supreme governor and our final

rewarder. He expects that we ſhould put on a ſacred hardineſs of ſoul; he requires that we ſhould not indulge a ſpirit of fear, but be armed with power and courage, that we may endure to the end; and bleſſed be his name, that he hath given us promiſes to raiſe our hopes, that as he endued his people in ancient times with his grace, ſo he will beſtow this ſpirit of holy fortitude upon us alſo; and that as our day is, ſo ſhall our ſtrength be.

And now, O my ſoul, turn thy thoughts inward, and inquire what attainments thou haſt made in this ſacred courage. I acknowledge there is a God, but am I not ſometimes aſhamed to call upon him in the morning for his preſence all the day, leſt my companions ſhould know I have been upon my knees? Have I courage to aſk a bleſſing on my food, where others deride the practice?—I have learned, and believed the religion of Jeſus; but

have I ever yet had courage enough to make a ſolemn and public profeſſion of it? Or am I only a believer in ſecret, aſhamed to make profeſſion of my faith, by joining myſelf to ſome Chriſtian aſſembly? If this be my ſtate, I have now a loud call to add fortitude to my faith, and aſſume Chriſtian courage to profeſs the ſacred name in which I have believed. Or am I a profeſſor of this holy religion? I have liſted myſelf under the banner of Chriſt, in theſe days of liberty and peace, and while I dwell among thoſe who encourage my faith and profeſſion—But let me inquire whether I have ſuch a love to the goſpel, as to glory in it even amongſt infidels, who make it the object of their mockery and reproach. Has this divine religion ſuch a deep root in my heart, as to bear and reſiſt the ſtorms of the world, to ſtand firm and flouriſh ſtill? Have I courage to declare myſelf a diſciple of the croſs,

and a professor of a crucified Saviour, when I shall happen to be in the company of those who blaspheme him? Have I obtained holy boldness enough to practise virtue when it is out of fashion; and can I refuse to comply with the warmest temptations to a fashionable sin? Have I got such a victory over myself as to dare to be singular, if my company would lead me into any modish vice? This is a hard lesson to young and tender minds; but it must be learned, O my soul, if thou wilt be a Christian indeed! Can I see my friends and companions indulge a sinful course, and have I not one kind admonition for them? Have I virtue enough to warn my brother, and to turn his foot from the path of iniquity, that leads to ruin and death?

What zeal hast thou, O my soul, for reformation? Or canst thou bear with immoralities of every kind; and rather than venture to displease man, wilt thou let thy neighbour go

on for ever to displease God? What wouldst thou do, if thou wast called to face the great, and to profess religion before the mighty men of the earth? Is thy faith grown bold enough to shew itself in a place, and to venture all thy earthly interests for the defence of it? Thus far concerning my active fortitude. But how stands the case with regard to passive valour, and enduring of sufferings? Is my heart firm under sharp trials of providence? Can I resign my health and ease into the hand of God, without fretting or repining? Or doth my courage faint, and my impatience shamefully discover itself under the common pains and diseases of nature? It is to be allowed there is much weakness derived even to a manly spirit, from the distempers of the body; when the nerves are unbraced, and the tabernacle of the body tottering, the soul partakes of the infirmities of this poor fleshly engine. O frail

unhappy ſtate of human ſouls that dwell in clay! But is it thy conſtant labour and prayer, O my ſoul, that patience may have its perfect work, that thy ſpirit may be ever ſedate under all the pains and diſquietude of this mortal fleſh, and thy temper kept ſerene, under all the frowns and clouds of heaven?

Am I ready to face the King of Terrors, and to deſcend into the dark valley? Thou muſt meet this adverſary ſhortly, O my ſoul; labour therefore daily to get courage and victory over death, by faith in a dying and riſing Saviour.—Happy is that faith, that has no carnal fear attending it, but is got above the frowns and ſmiles of this world: my ſoul longs after it, and reaches at it as ſomething within the power of her preſent attainment through the grace of Chriſt. I long to be armed with this ſacred courage, and to have my heart fortified all round with theſe divine munitions. I would fain be

calm and ſerene in the midſt of buſ-
ſetings and reproaches, and purſue
my courſe ſteadily toward heaven
under the banner of faith, through
all the arrows of ſlander and malice.
Lord Jeſus, I wait for thy divine
influence to beſtow this grace, and
thy divine teaching to put me in a
way to obtain it.

A HYMN.

AM I a ſoldier of the croſs,
A follower of the lamb,
And ſhall I fear to own his cauſe,
Or bluſh to ſpeak his name?

II.

Muſt I be carried to the ſkies,
On flow'ry beds of eaſe,
While others fought to win the prize,
And failed through bloody ſeas?

III.

Are there no foes for me to face?
Muſt I not ſtem the flood?

Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

IV.

Sure I muſt fight, if I would reign,
Increaſe my courage, Lord!
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word.

V.

Thy ſaints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer tho' they die;
They ſee the triumph from afar,
And ſeize it with their eye.

VI.

When that illuſtrious day ſhall riſe,
And all thy armies ſhine,
In robes of victory through the ſkies,
The glory ſhall be thine.

1 Cor. xvi. 13.

Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

THERE is nothing, O my soul, in all the principles of natural religion, that can make the mind brave and noble, but it receives high advancements and glorious efficacy from Christianity.—I would cast my eyes on the noble patterns of courage in the New Testament, the blessed apostles, Peter and John, when they rejoiced to suffer shame for the sake of Christ their Lord, and boldly told the council of priests, they must obey God rather than men.—I would look at saint Paul, the most eminent Christian hero; behold him in the midst of the Roman soldiers, and a multitude of unbelieving Jews, acknowledging his exalted Saviour before captains and centurions, before Agrippa and Fe-

ſix; and with the ſame fortitude of ſoul, appearing before Cæſar at Rome; "I am not aſhamed," ſays he, "of the goſpel of Chriſt; for he whom I have truſted in, is almighty to ſupport me. I know," ſays he, "that bonds and afflictions wait for me, but none of theſe things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myſelf, that I may finiſh my courſe with joy."—The prophets and the apoſtles, the ancient ſaints and the primitive martyrs, have given us noble patterns of this virtue; and why ſhould our ſpirits fail, or our lips tremble, if we are called to the ſame glorious confeſſion? Is not our religion divine? Is not the goſpel ſtill worthy of the ſame honour? Is not our God the ſame Almighty? Is not our Redeemer the ſame Jeſus? And does not a dying, a riſing, and a reigning Saviour deſerve the ſame homage of our tongues, and demand the ſame glory at our hands?—Not only would I

look to the great cloud of witneſſes that are gone before; but above all to Jeſus, the author and finiſher of our faith. Conſider him, O my ſoul, that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt I be weary and faint in my mind; nor ſhould our ſpirits ſink while we behold his divine fortitude. Let ſuch an illuſtrious ſcene animate our ſouls, and inſpire the fainting believer with new courage.

If we are Chriſtians indeed, we are ſoldiers of Chriſt; we have entered the liſt with all the powers of hell; and are we afraid of man, that is a worm? We have ranged ourſelves under the banner of the Redeemer, and the Redeemer's army muſt fight againſt all the armies of darkneſs and their allies.

If we are Chriſtians, what promiſes of the divine preſence and help have we in the Bible? The preſence of God is an effectual ſupport. Saint Paul found it ſo; for

when all men forsook him, the Lord stood by and strengthened him. Alas! we are poor feeble trembling soldiers; our hands hang down, and our faces gather paleness; but we dare to confront the terrors of this world, if we taste and feel such divine encouragements: we know that a weak Christian can do wonders, with an almighty Saviour and an all-sufficient promise. Consider, O my soul, the large and never fading crown of glory that awaits the conqueror at the end of the Christian conflict! The honour and triumph, those riches of glory, and that everlasting inheritance, that shall be our reward in the future world, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! Let us gaze at our crown of life and our immortal hopes, till we feel our souls divinely animated to the combat. Would we wish to have this slavish fear removed? Let us apply the remedies of religion. If the divine

spirit concur with his blessing, the following methods may be made happily successful.

1st, Let us see to it that we are Christians. Indeed fear will prevail over every thing but true faith; and this faith must be always kept awake and lively, if we would raise our spirits to a sublime pitch of holy fortitude. Let us brighten our faith and hope daily, by a frequent examination of the frame of our hearts; by watchful walking before God; by committing our souls afresh into the hands of Jesus and his Spirit for pardoning and renewing grace, that we may believe on just and solid grounds that we are the children of God, and that Jesus is our salvation. A lively faith gives divine courage. Faith is a noble shield to ward off fear; and our helmet is the hope of salvation.

2d, Let the spirit of prayer be always in exercise, and the spirit of fortitude will descend upon us: let

us addreſs the throne of God with earneſtneſs and faith, and cry to the Lord, the God of our ſalvation, without ceaſing. Many a feeble Chriſtian, who has gone to the mercy-ſeat trembling, and almoſt overwhelmed with tumultuous fear, has riſen up from his knees with a heavenly calmneſs and compoſure: the army of his fears has vaniſhed at once, and he has gone out to face the moſt formidable of his adverſaries with divine reſolution and courage.

3d, Let us get a greater degree of weanedneſs from the fleſh, and from all the delights and ſatisfactions that belong to this mortal life, and learn to put off a little of that ſinful tenderneſs for ſelf which we brought into the world with us. "If any will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow me." We muſt go as far as we can toward parting with right hands and right eyes in every ſenſe

of the words, if we would be Chriſtians indeed.

What progreſs haſt thou made, O my ſoul, in acquiring this ſacred fortitude? Methinks I feel the want of this holy hardineſs of ſoul, to walk through the midſt of temptations unmoved, unterrified, and undefiled. My virtue and my religion have too often ſuffered by the prevailing power of a ſlaviſh fear; my conſcience has loſt its innocence and peace by too many ſinful compliances.

What ſhall I do to harden my ſpirit all over, that temptation and ſlaviſh fear may not find a place to enter? For this end I review the glorious motives ſet before me; for this end I look to the noble army of martyrs; to the bleſſed ſociety of the apoſtles; to the cloud of witneſſes which have trod the ſame path before me, who have borne an undaunted teſtimony to the ſame religion which I profeſs. But above

all, I fix my eye upon Jesus, the divine author of this religion, the author and finisher of my faith. I would learn of the Captain of my salvation, who was made perfect through sufferings, to endure hardships like a good soldier of Christ, while I fight under his banner against those very enemies that he hath subdued.

Consider, my soul, what thou art, what is thy character and profession. If thou art a Christian indeed, thou hast taken up arms against sin and Satan, and a world that is in rebellion against God.—And shall the frown of a man make thee drop thy weapons, and discourage thee from the glorious service? Thou hast rich encouragements to expect divine assistance. Many joyful assurances of victory are given to them that endure in the day of conflict; and a glorious crown stands ready for those that overcome. O may the crown of glory sparkle in my eye, and grow

brighter and larger by a nearer view, and a perpetual contemplation of it! Make me forgetful of eaſe and health, O my God, and of all my mortal intereſt, while I preſs forward, with ſacred courage, to lay hold on this crown! Bleſſed Saviour, make me triumph over every difficulty, till death, the laſt of all my enemies, be ſubdued, and I have obtained the glorious prize. I would ſhake myſelf out of my fears, and awaken my zeal by ſuch motives as theſe. I will renew my faith and the grounds of my hope, that I may know that I am a Chriſtian indeed; that I am one of the ſheep of Chriſt, and under his divine care; and I would watch againſt every temptation, leſt I contract a new guilt and defilement, and thereby darken my evidences and awaken my fears. I would ſurvey with pleaſure the gracious words of promiſe which are ſcattered up and down in the book of God. O may the bleſſed Spirit

print many of them upon my heart, that they may be always preſent with me; and that I may find them within my reach, and ready at hand as a ſpecial cordial in every fainting hour! I would run to them as my ſure refuge in every ſeaſon of danger and conflict, and be animated to confront a ſinful world.

Give me, O my God, give me the ſpirit of prayer, and let me keep ever near to the throne of grace, that my ſoul may not come thither as a ſtranger; but that in every ſurpriſe I may addreſs thee as a God near at hand; and that in the name of my great high prieſt, Jeſus the Son of God, I may find grace ready to help me in the time of need. Wean me, O Lord, from all the delights and hopes of fleſh and ſenſe! Mortify me to all the honours and the joys of a periſhing life and a vain world! Arm my ſoul all over with a religious hardineſs, that I may venture into the field of battle, and may ſcarce

feel the wounds which I receive in thy cauſe!

Surely I have had ſome experience of the divine preſence with me in the midſt of dangers! God has ſometimes diſappointed all my fears, and interpoſed his ſhield of power and love for my defence! Why ſhould not I truſt a faithful God? and that infinite goodneſs which I have already taſted of?

I would be bravely prepared for the worſt of ſufferings to which my circumſtances in this life may expoſe me! I would be ready to meet contempt and ſcandal, poverty, ſickneſs, and death itſelf! Jeſus can ſupport me in the heavieſt diſtreſſes, though all the ſorrows I fear ſhould come upon me; he can bear me on the wings of faith and hope, high above all the turmoils and diſquietudes of life; he can carry me through the ſhadow of the dark valley, and ſcatter all the terrors of it. Give me, O Lord, theſe wings of

faith and hope, and bear me upon them through all the remains of my short journey in the wilderneſs! Make me active and zealous in thy cauſe while I live, and convey me ſafely, above the reach of fear, through the valley of death, to the inheritance prepared for me in the land of light. Then my fears ſhall ceaſe for ever, for enemies and dangers are not known in that land: there all our conflicts ſhall be changed into everlaſting triumphs, while ſongs of honour and ſalvation aſcend in a full choir to the grace that has made us overcomers. Amen.

A HYMN.

When tumults of unruly fear
Riſe in my heart, and riot there;
What ſhall I do to calm my breaſt,
And get the vexing foe ſuppreſt?

II.

What power can theſe wild thoughts
controul,
This ruffling tempeſt of the ſoul?
Where ſhall I fly in this diſtreſs,
But to the throne of glorious grace?

III.

My faith would ſeize ſome promiſe,
Lord;
There's power and ſafety in thy word:
Not all that earth or hell can ſay,
Shall tempt or drive my ſoul away.

IV.

I call the days of old to mind,
When I have found my God was
kind;
My heavenly friend is ſtill the ſame;
Salvation to his holy name.

V.

Great God, preſerve my conſcience
clean,
Waſh me from guilt, forgive my ſin;
Thy love ſhall guard me from ſurpriſe,
Though threatning dangers round me
riſe!

VI.

When fear like a wild ocean raves,
Let Jesus walk upon the waves,
And say, 'tis I; that heavenly voice
Shall sink the storm, and raise my joys.

Job xxiii. 34.

O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat; I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

THERE is such a thing as converse with God in prayer; and it is the life and pleasure of a pious soul; without it we are no Christians; and he that practises it most, is the best follower of Christ. This is the balm that eases the most raging pains of the mind, when the wounded conscience comes to the mercy-seat, and finds pardon and peace there,

This is the cordial that revives and exalts our natures, when the ſpirit, broken with ſorrows and almoſt fainting to death, draws near to the almighty Phyſician, and is healed and refreſhed. The mercy-ſeat in heaven is our ſureſt and ſweeteſt refuge in every hour of diſtreſs and darkneſs on earth, our daily ſupport and relief while we are paſſing through a world of temptations and hardſhips in the way to the promiſed land. It is good for us to draw near to God; and yet ſo much is human nature ſunk down and fallen from God, that even his own children are ready to indulge a neglect of converſe with him, if their ſouls are not always upon the watch: but let us remember, that ſo much as we abate of this divine entertainment among the vanities or amuſements of the world, the buſineſſes or burdens of life, ſo much we loſe of the glory and joy of religion, and deprive our ſouls of the comfort that God invites

us to receive. Job was encompaſſed with ſorrows all around, and his friends had cenſured him as a vile hypocrite and a great ſinner, becauſe he was ſo terribly afflicted by the hand of God; whither ſhould he run now but to his heavenly Father, and tell him of all his ſufferings? From the practice of this holy man, I have ſufficient warrant to draw this inference, that when a ſaint draws near to God in prayer, he tells him all his circumſtances, and pleads for help: and this doctrine I would endeavour now to improve. O, if I could but come near him, even to his ſeat, I would order my cauſe before him! I would ſpread all my concerns before his eye, and I would plead with him for relief! I would fill my mouth with arguments. When the queſtion is aſked by a carnal man, what can a Chriſtian talk to God ſo long and ſo often about? the Chriſtian, in a divine frame, anſwers, he hath matter

enough for converſe with God to wear out time and to fill up eternity! It may well be aſked, what he has not to ſay? What is there that relates to God or to himſelf, to the upper or the lower world, that he may not at ſome time ſay to his God? If I could but come near the mercy-ſeat, I would confeſs how great my ſins are, and I would pray for pardoning grace; I would ſay, how vile I am by nature! I would count my original deſcent from Adam, the great tranſgreſſor, and humble myſelf at the foot of a holy God; becauſe I am the deſcendant of ſuch a ſinner! I would tell him how much viler I have made myſelf by practice; I would tell my God how multiplied my tranſgreſſions have been before I knew him; and how aggravated they have been ſince I have been acquainted with him. How I have ſinned againſt mercies, againſt reproofs, againſt warnings received often from his word, and

often from his providence? I behold, says the saint, the great Atonement, the blood of Jesus; and therefore I may venture to confess my great iniquities, for the satisfaction is equal to them all. I am ready to confess that my sins are all crimson and scarlet; but there is cleansing blood with thy Son; blood that has washed the garments of a thousand sinners, and made them white as snow; and it has the same virtue still to wash mine too. I trust in it, and rejoice when I behold that blood sprinkled upon the mercy-seat; and therefore I grow confident in hope, and draw yet nearer to God, a reconciled God, since his throne has the memorials of a bleeding sacrifice upon it.

If I could get near the seat of God, I would tell him how many my enemies are, and how strong, how malicious, and how full of rage; and I would beg strength against them, and victory over them.

Then would I complain to God of all my indwelling corruption of the body, of death that dwells in me, or in which I dwell, and say, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? I would tell him of the secret workings of pride in my heart; I would acquaint him of the vanity of my own mind, though I am perpetually endeavouring to subdue it. I would tell him, with tears, of my sinful passions, of the perpetual stirrings of disorders by affections, whereby I am led away from my God: I would tell him of the hardness of my heart, and the obstinacy of my temper; I would open before his eye all the vices of my constitution, all those secret seeds of iniquity that are ever budding and blossoming to bring forth fruit unto death; I would complain of this sore enemy, the world, that is perpetually besetting me, that strikes upon all my senses, that by the ears, and the eyes, and all the outward faculties,

draws my heart away from God, my beſt friend. I would tell him of the rage of Satan, that watchful and malicious enemy; that I cannot engage in any duty of worſhip, but he is ready to throw in ſome fooliſh or vain ſuggeſtion to divert me; and I would look forward, and point to my laſt enemy, Death, and beg the preſence of my God with me when I walk through the dark valley. Lord, when I enter into that conflict, aſſiſt me, that I may fear no evil, but be made more than a conqueror through him that has loved me.

I would mourn, and tell my God how little converſe I have with himſelf, how much he is hidden from me! I would complain to him how far off I am from him the moſt part of my life! How few are the hours of my communion with him! How ſhort is the viſit! How much his face is concealed from me! and how far my heart is divided from him! I would then cry out with bitterneſs,

why is God so far from me? and why is my heart so far from God? How often do I wait upon him in his own sanctuary, and among his saints? but I am not favoured with the sight of his power and glory there! And how often do I seek him in my secret retirement, but I find him not! I would tell him how often I read his promises in the gospel, and taste no sweetness. I go frequently to those wells of consolation, and they seem to be dry; then I turn my face, and go away ashamed!

I would tell him too of my temporal troubles, if I get near to God; because they unfit me for his service; they make me incapable of honouring him in the world, and render me unfit for enjoying him in his ordinances. I would tell him how they damp my zeal, how they bow my spirit down, and make me go mourning all the day long to the dishonour of Christianity, which is a

diſpenſation of grace and joy. Thus I might complain before God of pains and of weakneſs, of the diſorders of the fleſh. I might complain there too of the weakneſs of all my powers, the want of memory, the ſcatterings and confuſions that are upon my thoughts, the wanderings of my fancy, and the unhappy influence that a feeble and diſeaſed body has upon the mind. O my God, how am I divided from thee by dwelling in ſuch a tabernacle! ſtill patching up a tottering cottage, and waſting my hours in a painful attendance on the infirmities of the fleſh? Theſe are my weekly ſorrows and groans; theſe are my daily fears and troubles, and theſe ſhall be ſpread before the eyes of my God, in the happy hour when I get near him.

And I would not go away without a word of pity and complaint concerning my relations, my friends and acquaintance that are afar off

from God: I would put in one word of petition for them that are careleſs and unconcerned for themſelves; I would weep a little at the ſeat of God for them.—Then would I remember my friends in Chriſt, my brethren and kindred in the goſpel, ſuch as labour under heavy burdens, languiſh under various infirmities of life, or groan under the power of ſtrong temptation. When God indulges me with the favour of his ear, I would ſpread their wants and ſorrows before him, together with my own, and make ſupplication for all ſaints; and I would breathe out many ſighs for Zion, that ſhe may be the joy of the whole earth.—What a dull and uncomfortable thing, O my ſoul, is religion without drawing near to God! for this is the very buſineſs for which religion is deſigned. It is to little purpoſe, that we join in the fellowſhip of the goſpel, and attend many ſeaſons of prayer: it is to very little purpoſe to read chap-

ters, and to hear ſermons one day after another, if we have not the ſubſtance and powers of godlineſs, if our God be not near us, if we never get near to God. How happy are we under the goſpel above all ages and nations! for we have advantages of getting near to God beyond what any other religion has; we have better ordinances and brighter mediums of converſe with God. O, how ſhould we value our acquaintance with Chriſt, and pray earneſtly for his ſpirit? One makes a way for our coming near to God, and the other actually brings us near. How bleſſed indeed muſt that ſtate of glory be where we ſhall be ever near to God, even to his ſeat, and have no ſorrows to tell him of? It will be a ſweet redoubling of all the delights of enjoyment in heaven, to tell him in the language of that world, what infinite ſatisfaction we feel in his ſociety. O that I could raiſe my ſoul to bleſſed breathings after this

felicity; but how infinitely ſhort muſt the brighteſt deſcriptions fall of this ſtate and place! God grant that I may learn one day the extent and glory of this bleſſedneſs, by ſweet and everlaſting experience. Amen.

A HYMN.

O THAT I knew the ſacred place
Where I might find my God!
I'd ſpread my wants before his face,
And pour my woes abroad.

II.

I'd tell him how my ſins ariſe,
What ſorrows I ſuſtain;
How grace decays and comfort dies,
And leave my heart in pain.

III.

I'd ſay, how fleſh and ſenſe rebel!
What inward foes combine
With the vain world and powers of hell,
To vex this ſoul of mine!

IV.

He knows what arguments I'd take,
To wreſtle with my God;
I'd plead for his own mercy's ſake,
And for my Saviour's blood.

V.

My God will pity my complaints,
And heal my broken bones:
He takes the meaning of his ſaints,
The language of their groans.

VI.

Ariſe my ſoul from deep diſtreſs,
And baniſh every fear;
He calls thee to his throne of grace,
To ſpread thy ſorrows there.

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1 Cor. iii. 22.

Whether life or death—all are yours.

COME, my ſoul, who art daily converſing with the affairs and concerns of life; come now and medi-

tate on the name of Death. It is a name that carries much terror in it to nature. Come and ſee whether thou canſt not derive a bleſſing from it by the inſtructions of the goſpel, and the aids of grace.—Alas! what devaſtation has ſin made in our world! It is this that has laid cities deſolate and fills the graves; it is this that has corrupted and deſtroyed our natures; it has turned millions of ſtrong and well-formed bodies into duſt; it has ruined the moſt beautiful part of God's lower creation, and is ſending thouſands daily to the pit of corruption and noiſome darkneſs; it is ſin that has filled our nature with diſeaſes, and ſown the poiſonous ſeeds of mortality and death in every ſon and daughter of Adam.—But, O my ſoul, melancholy as this ſcene is, it may through divine aſſiſtance be improved to the beſt intereſt. Haſt thou ſeen the vanity of man as a mortal dying creature? It is an eaſy matter to ſay, Alas! we muſt

all die; but haſt thou felt the penetrating force of this truth, and does it influence thy whole conduct? Art thou not ſtill at every turn putting thy confidence in one creature or another, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils, and whoſe death diſappoints thy hope? Or haſt thou removed thy dependence from all creatures to God, and fixed thy hope in him, that lives for ever? O bleſſed effect of the meditation of death!

Again, haſt thou ſeen the heinous evil of ſin in the ſpreading deſolation that death has made over this lower world? Remember that it received its commiſſion from the juſtice of God almoſt ſix thouſand years ago, and from his law, which ſin had broken. The dreadful execution proceeds till this day, and it will proceed till there be no ſinners upon earth. Sin is the ſpring of all this havock of the lives of men; it is ſin that has deſerved all theſe tremendous executions of wrath; and yet, O

my ſoul, how often haſt thou indulged this miſchief to play about thy boſom like a harmleſs thing!—Come view the diſmal effects of it in the death of millions, and learn to hate and renounce it for ever. It is no ſmall evil that could awaken the indignation of God at this rate; and diffuſe it ſo widely over ſo large and ſo glorious a part of his creation, as the whole nature and race of man. Again, I would inquire, has the death of mankind taught me effectually, that I muſt ſhortly die? And have I been excited to make a ſuitable proviſion for this awful and important hour, ſince I muſt not, I cannot eſcape it?

Not only the death of mankind in general, but the death of wicked men may inſtruct me in ſome uſeful leſſons too. Here I learn how God reſcues his children from the rage of oppreſſors, when he ſmites them down to death, and lays all their fury ſilent in the duſt. Thus death itſelf

becomes a deliverer to the saints, by destroying their cruel persecutors.

I learn also, that when early or sudden death has seized a bold sinner, it is a loud warning word to all his companions. When I see such terrible examples in the course of Providence, let my soul stand in awe and fear: and if God has distinguished me by his mercy, if he has made me one of his own children, and prepared me for dying, when he summonses others away unpardoned, unsanctified, unprepared, let all my powers be excited to bless the name of the Lord for his saving love! I was also a child of wrath, but divine grace has made the difference: it is grace that has snatched me from the brink of the pit of destruction, and is training me up for heaven. And while I adore thy distinguishing mercy, O my God, to me, I would pity and pray for poor heedless and regardless sinners, that are following one another in a dismal succession

down to the gates of death. O may their eyes and ſouls be awakened in their day of life and hope, leſt death ſeize them, and ſend them farther down to everlaſting darkneſs and deſpair!

But if ſuch leſſons as theſe may be derived from the death of ſinners, how much more benefit may be drawn from the dying hours of a ſincere Chriſtian; eſpecially if his heart be ſtrong, and faith lively? Here I ſee the goſpel of Chriſt in ſome of its power and glory, when I ſee a Chriſtian, under all the weakneſſes and languiſhings of nature, meeting death without terror, and overcoming his laſt enemy by the blood of the Lamb. I ſee the ſaint all ſerene and peaceful even in the agonies of dying nature, and amidſt the ſorrows of lamenting friends: he has heaven in view, and he bids farewel to earth with holy joy. Shall I not imitate the faith and holineſs of his life, which laid a foundation

for so peaceful and glorious a death? Do I not feel my soul a little more weaned from the world, since such a pious friend has left it? Has not death lost some of its frightful appearances since I have actually seen it conquered? Do I not feel my heart panting and breathing toward the society above, since I have another friend gone thither? Does it not seem a more easy thing to me to lay down this tabernacle, to part with flesh and blood, and to venture into those unseen regions, since I have beheld my fellow Christian go before me? He has made the great and solemn experiment, and surely I should have courage to follow! He has given evident proof that there is a sacred power in the gospel, the promises, and the grace of God, to convey the soul safe through the dark shadow of death, without surprise and consternation; and has not my soul the same rich encouragements, the same promises of grace,

and the ſame goſpel of hope? O my Redeemer and my Lord, hear a humble ſuppliant! Influence my ſoul by thy rich grace to keep my faith awake! my conſcience undefiled, and my evidences for heaven ever bright and clear; and when my appointed hour comes, that ſolemn and final hour, let me die the death of the righteous, and my departure be like his!

Is death an enemy to nature, and does it carry terror in the name? Yet ſince thou haſt ſubdued this enemy, and taken it captive to ſerve the purpoſe of thy love; ſince thou haſt numbered it, and written it down among the poſſeſſions of thy people; ſince thou haſt taught ſo many of thy followers to triumph over it, let me alſo bleſs Jeſus; let me be enabled to meet it with holy fortitude and a lively hope! O let me follow the footſteps of the flock into the world of ſpirits, with a ſa-

cred pleasure, though it be through a dark passage! And, as those who went before me, have taught me to dare to die, so let my dying moments encourage those who come after me, to venture into death at thy call, without terror and without reluctance. Amen.

A HYMN.

HAS death such vast destruction made?
Does every hour increase the dead?
Here I behold the guilt of sin,
That brought this spreading mischief in.

II.

Great God! how awful and how just
Thy law, that turns our flesh to dust!
O let me learn how frail am I,
And all my life prepare to die!

III.

When impious wretches yield their breath,
And go unpardoned down to death;
Awake, my ſoul, adore the grace,
That gave thee a repenting ſpace!

IV.

But when a ſaint with cheerful air,
Meets his laſt foe, and feels no fear:
Our faith, our hope, and courage grow,
We learn to face the tyrant too.—

V.

We could renounce our all things here,
And wiſh that moment would appear
When we ſhall leave this world and riſe
To meet the joys above the ſkies.

1 Cor. iii. 22.

Whether life or death—all are yours.

YES, O my ſoul, formidable as the name of death is, in all its appearances, it may furniſh the mind of a believer with ſome ſacred leſſons of truth or holineſs. When it appears in the extent of its dominion, and bringing all mankind down to the duſt; when it lays hold on an impenitent ſinner, and fills his fleſh and ſoul with agonies; when it aſſaults a ſaint, and is conquered by faith; when it makes a wide ravage among our acquaintance, when it enters into our families, and takes away our near and dear relatives from the midſt of us; ſtill the Chriſtian may reap ſome divine advantage by it. But can our death be ever turned into a bleſſing too? Nature thinks it hard to learn ſuch a leſſon

as this. Can that be a bleſſing which turns this active and beautiful engine of the body into loathſome clay? which cloſes theſe eyes in long darkneſs, and deprives us of every ſenſe? Can death become a bleſſing to us, which cuts us off from all converſe with the ſun and moon, and that rich variety of ſenſible objects which furniſh out ſuch delightful ſcenes all around us, and entertain the whole animal creation? Can that be a bleſſing which divides aſunder thoſe two intimate friends, the fleſh and ſpirit? that ſends one of them to the noiſome priſon of the grave, and hurries away the other into unknown regions? Yes, the goſpel of Chriſt has power and grace enough in it to take off all theſe gloomy appearances from death, and to illuminate the darkeſt ſide of it with various luſtre. So the ſun paints the faireſt colours upon the blackeſt cloud; and while the thick dark ſhower is deſcending, it entertains our eyes with all the

beauties of the rainbow. A moſt glorious type and ſeal of the covenant of grace, that can give a pleaſing aſpect to death itſelf, and ſpread light and pleaſure over the darkſome grave!

Is death become ours through the grace of the covenant? Let us then learn to ſhame ourſelves out of our weakneſſes and unreaſonable fears: let us talk to ourſelves in the language of faith. Why, O my ſoul, why art thou afraid to let this body die? Haſt thou not endured labours and trials enough, and art thou unwilling to come to the end of them? Haſt thou not yet been tempted enough? Haſt thou not been foiled too often, and too often thrown down in the conflict? Think of the many wounds of conſcience, the bruiſes of thy ſpirit, the defilement of thy garments, and the loſs of thy purity and peace. Canſt thou bear that all theſe ſhould be repeated again and again? Art thou unwilling this war

ſhould have an end? Art thou afraid of victory and triumph? What doſt thou labour and fight for? Doſt thou not run to obtain the prize? Doſt thou not wreſtle and fight to gain the crown? And haſt thou not courage enough to go acroſs the dark valley, to take poſſeſſion of this crown and this prize?

Think, O my ſpirit, think of thy painful ignorance whilſt thou dwelleſt in this region of ſhadows. Is not knowledge thy natural and delicious food? Haſt thou not lived long enough in darkneſs, and been involved too long in miſtakes and errors? And art thou afraid of the borders of that world, where light and knowledge grow, and where truth and realities appear all unvailed? Has it not been the matter of thy ſacred mourning, that thy God is ſo much concealed from thee, that greateſt and beſt of Beings? That the Son of God, the brightneſs of the Father's glory, is ſo much a ſtranger, and thy

Saviour is so little known? And hast thou not, O my soul, sinned enough, and broken the laws of God enough already? Hast thou not brought guilt enough and grief enough upon thyself, that thou art afraid of a state of perfect holiness? What is it that has given thee such inward pain at the perpetual working of thy native iniquity? What is it that has made thee cry out,—O wretched creature that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? from the temptations and sins which are mingled with flesh and blood? And art thou afraid to have thy groans ended, thy complaints removed, and thy deliverance appear? Art thou unwilling to accept of the release? Dost thou shrink back from the sight of the Deliverer? Has not thy faith often seen the spirits of the just made perfect, standing before the throne, rejoicing before God, worshipping in the complete beauty of holiness?

And has not thy faith awakened thy deſires and thy ſacred wiſhes? O that I were in the midſt of them! Why then art thou ſo unwilling to leave this body of ſin and darkneſs, and to go out of this troubleſome and impure priſon, into that glorious world, that bleſſed aſſembly, and to worſhip amongſt them without imperfection and without wearineſs? Conſider, O my ſoul, are thy complaints of indwelling corruption ſincere? Why then art thou afraid to let this tabernacle be diſſolved, and to gain a bleſſed releaſe from theſe inbred and reſtleſs enemies? Has not the luſtre of perfect holineſs attraction and force enough in it to awaken thy longings, and ſtretch thy wings for a flight to heaven? Remember alſo, whilſt thou art here, and art often ſinning, many of the threatenings of God in his word ſtand bent againſt thee: his arrows ſometimes ſtick in thy fleſh, and pierce thy very ſoul. I confeſs theſe

are not the ſword of his vindictive juſtice: thy afflictions are but the corrections of his rod. But it is better to dwell in that world where thou ſhalt feel no ſuch correcting ſtrokes, and deſerve chaſtiſement no more. The Lord thy God ſhall lay aſide every frown, and remove his anger for ever. Thy beſt life now is to live upon the promiſe. But does not all the excellency of a promiſe conſiſt in the hope of performance? And is not the performance then ſo much better than the promiſe itſelf? Is not poſſeſſion better than hope? Is it not much more agreeable to dwell in the houſe of God for ever, than only to make a viſit to it now and then? Is it not infinitely better to be fixed in a ſtate of perfect felicity, without the leaſt fear or apprehenſion of loſing it, to be a pillar in the temple of thy God, and go no more out!—Think again, haſt thou not ſuſtained ſufficient pains and ſorrows both of fleſh and mind in this

lower world? Death ſhall put an end to them all: and art thou unwilling to have a full releaſe from ſorrow and pain? Has this fleſh of thine been complained of ſo often as thy clog and thy painful priſon; and art thou afraid to have thy fetters knocked off? Has not thy body given thee ſmart and anguiſh enough? And has it not tempted thee enough away from thy God and thy trueſt happineſs?

It is true, the mere deſire of eaſe ſhould not be the chief reaſon why thou ſhouldeſt deſire death; nor ſhouldeſt thou ſeek it with an impatient ſpirit. It is thy duty to bear ſufferings and ſorrows with holy patience, as a good ſoldier of Chriſt. It is thy duty to abide in thy poſt during his pleaſure, to fill up the hours with ſervice, and to ſuſtain the fatigues and burdens of the mortal ſtate to the glory of God thy Saviour.—But he does not require that thou ſhouldeſt fall in love with a ſtate of guilt and

pain; a ſtate that has ſo much ſin and temptation in it. He gives thee leave to groan after the hour of releaſe and deliverance.

In the heavenly country every companion is an everlaſting friend, and all thy dear and pious kindred, who are departed, have put off every thing, that once made thee or them uneaſy.—They are far better company above than ever they were or could be here on earth: and doſt thou not want to ſee them in their beſt raiment of grace and glory, and to hold communion with them in the pureſt intercourſes of love?

But there are ſtill ſweeter allurements to a holy ſoul. God, even thy God dwells in the midſt of his ſaints on high; and that in the full glories of his love. Jeſus, the Saviour whom thou haſt known, and whom thou haſt loved, though thou haſt never ſeen him—Jeſus is Lord of that country; he waits for thee there. God himſelf dwells there, as

he fountain of felicity, and ſhall be no more abſent from thee.—Thou ſhalt no more complain of the withdrawings of the light of his countenance, or the ſhort viſits of his grace. Thou ſhalt ſit ſolitary no more, nor mourn under the dark eclipſes of the ſun of righteouſneſs. It is the pleaſure of that heaven thou hopeſt for, to be for ever with thy Lord, to behold his glory, to ſee him as he is, and to be like him; and wilt thou not enter in at the gate into the new Jeruſalem, when he calls thee? but tremble and ſtart backward, becauſe there is a ſhort dark valley that lies on this ſide of it?

Remember, O my ſoul, death is thine; there is nothing in that dark valley ſhall hurt thee: lift up thy head, ariſe and ſhake thyſelf out of the duſt.—Let thy faith take a ſweet proſpect over the hills of time, and beyond the vale of death: look far into the inviſible world, and baniſh all thy fears under the ſtrong allure-

ment of the joys that are prepared for thee; wait with pleasure for the hour of thy departure, and rejoice and triumph when the divine message shall come. While thou continuest here, life is thine; when thou goest hence, death is thine; things present and things to come are thine; and the invisible world, to which thou art hastening, has everlasting joys in reserve for thee; heaven itself is thine, heaven is the inheritance of all the saints: the glories laid up there are waiting for thy possession. The dissolution of thy earthly tabernacle shall convey thee into the midst of them.—Awake, arise, and meet the happy moment when thou shalt be undressed of this sinful flesh and blood. O let these defiled garments ever fit loose about thee, that they may be cast off without pain and regret. Go, my soul, at the summons of thy God and Father; and when the symptoms of dying nature shall say, "Hark, he calleth thee," let thy faith, and thy

ove, and thy joy anſwer, "Lord, come." Go, my ſoul, at the invitation of thy Redeemer, at the voice of thy beloved. Behold, he appears, he comes: go forth and meet him, drop this fleſhly cloathing with holy delight: ariſe, put on thy beautiful garments and ſhine, for the glory of the Lord is riſing upon thee; go ſhine among the ſpirits of the juſt made perfect: thyſelf a ſpirit releaſed from earth, and diveſted of all imperfections. O happy farewel to life and time! O glorious entrance into immortality!

A HYMN.

Do fleſh and nature dread to die?
And timorous thoughts our minds enſlave?
But grace can raiſe our hopes on high,
And quell the terrors of the grave.

II.

What? shall we run to gain the crown,
Yet grieve to think the goal so near?
Afraid to have our labours done,
And finish this important war?

III.

Do we not dwell in clouds below,
And little know the God we love?
Why should we like this twilight so,
When 'tis all noon in worlds above?

IV.

There shall we see him face to face;
There shall we know the great Unknown:
And Jesus, with his glorious grace,
Shines in full light amidst the throne.

V.

When we put off this fleshly load,
We're from a thousand mischiefs free;
For ever present with our God,
Where we have long'd and wish'd to be.

VI.

No more ſhall pride or paſſion riſe,
Or envy fret, or malice roar;
Or ſorrow mourn with downcaſt eyes,
And ſin defile our ſouls no more.

VII.

Tis beſt, 'tis infinitely beſt,
To go where tempters cannot come,
Where ſaints and angels, ever bleſt,
Dwell, and enjoy their heavenly home.

VIII.

O for a viſit from my God!
To drive my fears of death away;
And help me thro' this darkſome road,
To realms of everlaſting day.

Rev. x. 5, 6.

And the angel which I saw ſtand upon the ſea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and ſware by him that liveth for ever and ever,—that there ſhould be time no longer.

THIS is the oath and the ſolemn ſentence of a mighty angel that came down from heaven; and by the deſcription of him in the firſt verſe, he ſeems to be the angel of God's preſence, in whom is the name of God, even our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, who pronounced and ſware, that time ſhould be no longer.

Let us ſtand ſtill here, and conſider what awful and important thoughts are contained in this ſentence! What ſolemn ideas ſhould ariſe to the view of mortal creatures, when it ſhall be pronounced concerning each of them, that time ſhall be no more.

The time of the recovery of our nature from its ſinful and wretched ſtate ſhall be no longer: we come into this world fallen creatures, children of iniquity and heirs of death: we have loſt the image of God who made us; nor can we ever be made truly happy till the image of the bleſſed God be reſtored upon us; till we are made holy as he is holy; till we have a divine change paſſed upon us, whereby we are created anew, and reformed in heart and practice. Of what infinite importance is it then to be frequently awakening ourſelves to inquire, whether this image of God is begun to be renewed? Whether we have this glorious change wrought in us? Whether our deſires and delights are fixed upon holy and heavenly things inſtead of thoſe ſenſual and earthly objects which draw away our ſouls from God and heaven? Let it appear to us a matter of the utmoſt moment, to ſeek after this change; let

us purſue it with unwearied diligence, and ſtrivings with our own hearts, and perpetual importunities at the throne of grace; leſt the voice of him who ſwears that there ſhall be time no longer, ſhould ſeize us in ſome unexpected moment; and leſt he ſware in his wrath concerning us, let him that is unholy be unholy ſtill.

Of what infinite importance is it, O my ſoul, to be ever ready for the end of time! Ready to hear this awful ſentence confirmed with the oath of the glorious angel, that time ſhall be no longer! The terrors or the comforts of a dying bed depend upon it; the ſolemn and deciſive voice of judgment depends upon it; the joys and the terrors of a long eternity depend upon it; a due ſenſe of time haſtening to its period will furniſh us with perpetual new occaſion of holy meditation. Do I obſerve the declining day, and the ſetting ſun ſinking into darkneſs? So declines

he day of life, the hours of labour, nd the ſeaſon of grace. O may I iniſh my appointed work with ho- nour ere the light is fled! May I im- prove the ſhining hours of grace ere he ſhadows of the evening overtake me, and my time of working is no more!

Lo I ſee the moon gliding along through midnight, and fulfilling her ſtages in the duſky ſky? This planet alſo is meaſuring out my life, and bringing the number of my months to their end! May I be prepared to take leave of the ſun and moon, and bid adieu to theſe viſible heavens and all the twinkling glories of them! Theſe are all but the meaſurers of my time, and haſten me on towards eter- nity!

Am I walking in a garden, and ſtand ſtill to obſerve the ſlow motion of the ſhadow upon a dial there, it paſſes over the hour-lines with an imperceptible progreſs; yet it will touch the laſt line of daylight ſhortly,

So my hours and my moments move onward with a ſilent pace; but they will arrive with certainty at the laſt limit, how heedleſs ſoever I am of their motion, and how thoughtleſs ſoever I may be of the improvement of time or of the end of it!

Does a new year commence, and the firſt morning of it dawn upon me? let me remember that I have one year the leſs to travel through this world, and to fulfil the various ſervices of a travelling ſtate. May my diligence in duty be doubled, ſince the number of my appointed years is diminiſhed! Do I find a new birth-day in my ſurvey of the calendar, the day wherein I entered upon the ſtage of mortality, and was born into this world of ſins, frailties, and ſorrows, in order to my probation for a better ſtate. Bleſſed Lord, how much have I ſpent already of this mortal life! this ſeaſon of my probation! and how little am I prepared for that happier world

How unready for my dying moments! I am haſtening hourly to the end of the life of man, which began at my nativity. Am I yet born of God? Have I begun the life of a ſaint? Am I prepared for that awful day which ſhall determine the number of my months on earth? Am I fit to be born into the world of ſpirits, through the ſtrait gate of death? Am I renewed in all the powers of my nature, and made meet to enter into that unſeen world, where there ſhall be no more of theſe revolutions of days and years? but one eternal day fills up all the ſpace with divine pleaſure, or one eternal night with long and deplorable diſtreſs and darkneſs!

When I ſee a friend expiring, or the corps of my neighbour conveyed to the grave: alas! their months and minutes are all determined, and the ſeaſons of their trial are finiſhed for ever; they are gone to their eternal home, and the ſtate of their ſouls is

fixed unchangeably! The angel that has ſworn their time ſhall be no longer, has concluded their hopes, or has finiſhed their fears; and, according to the rules of righteous judgment, has decided their miſery or happineſs for a long immortality: take this warning, O my ſoul, and think of thy own removal.

O the painful and unhappy ignorance of the ſons and daughters of men, that are ſent hither on a trial for eternity, and yet know not how to paſs away their time! O that theſe loiterers would once conſider that time loiters not, days and hours, months and years loiter not; each of them flies away with ſwifteſt wing, as faſt as ſucceſſion admits of, and bears them onward to the goal of eternity! The awful moment is haſtening upon them, which ſhall teach them terribly the true value of time. Then they would give all the golden pleaſures of this world to purchaſe one ſhort day more, or one

hour of time wherein they might repent and return to God, and get within the reach of hope and salvation. But time, and salvation, and hope, are all vaniſhed, and fled and gone out of their reach for ever!

O that we, who have already loſt much time, may begin now to do what in us lies to regain it by double diligence in the matters of our ſalvation, leſt the voice of the archangel ſhould finiſh our time of trial, and call us to judgment before we are prepared. What time lies before us for this double improvement, God only knows; the meaſure of our days is with him, and every evening the number is diminiſhed. Let not the riſing ſun upbraid you with continued negligence; let the thoughts of our paſt conduct be ſuch an effectual weight on our hearts, as to keep us ever vigorous in preſent duty: ſince we have been ſo long and loitering in our Chriſtian race in time paſt, let us take larger ſteps

daily, and ſtretch all the powers of our ſouls to haſten towards the crown and the prize. Let us hearken to the voice of God in his word with ſtronger attention and zeal to profit. Pray to a long ſuffering God with double fervency; cry aloud and give him no reſt, till our ſinful ſouls are changed into penitence, and renewed to holineſs; till we have ſome good evidence of our ſincere love to God, and unfeigned faith in his Son Jeſus; that when days and months are no more, we may enter into the region of everlaſting light and peace.

O bleſſed creatures! who have ſo happily improved the time of life and day of grace, as to obtain the reſtoration of the image of God in ſome degree on their ſouls, and to recover the favour of God through the goſpel of Chriſt, for which end time was beſtowed upon them. They have reviewed their follies with ſhame in the land of hope, and are become new creatures, and their lips and

their lives declare the divine change. Happy ſouls indeed, who have ſo valued time, as not to let it run off in trifles, but have obtained treaſures more valuable than that time which is gone, even the riches of the covenant of grace, and the hopes of an eternal inheritance in glory! Amen.

A HYMN.

THEE we adore, eternal name!
And humbly own to thee,
How feeble is our mortal frame,
What dying worms are we!

II.

Our waſting lives grow ſhorter ſtill,
As years and days increaſe;
And every beating pulſe we tell,
Leaves but the number leſs.

III.

Infinite joy or endleſs woe
Attends on every breath;
And yet how unconcerned we go,
Juſt on the brink of death!

IV.

Waken, O Lord, our drowsy sense
To walk this dangerous road;
And if our souls are hurried hence,
May they ascend to God!

Luke xii. 37.

Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.

VARIOUS and well chosen are those parables, whereby our Saviour gave warning to his disciples, that when he was departed from this world, they should ever be upon their guard, and always ready to receive him at his return; because he would come on a sudden, and in such an hour as they thought not, to demand an account of their behaviour, and to distribute his recompences according to their works.—As Christ may be said to come to us by the

meſſages or ſummons of death, ſo the many ſolemn writings and commands of watchfulneſs which attend theſe parables of Chriſt, have been uſually and with good reaſon applied to the hour of death alſo, for then the Lord comes to ſhut up the ſcene of each of our lives, our works are then finiſhed, our laſt day is come, and the world is then at an end with us.

The parable aſſures us that our Lord will certainly come, but whether at the ſecond or third watch, whether at midnight or near the morning is unknown to us; and it is this which renders the duty of perpetual watchfulneſs ſo neceſſary to all men. Yet whenever he comes, he expects we ſhould have our loins girded, like ſervants fit for buſineſs, and our lamps burning to attend him at the door; and that we be ready to receive him as ſoon as he knocks. Peace and bleſſedneſs attend the watchful Chriſtian whenever his Lord cometh,

Bleſſed is that ſervant, whom when his Lord cometh, he ſhall find watching. Let us conſider wherein the character of a watchful Chriſtian conſiſts. He is awake from the ſleep of death, and made ſpiritually alive: he hath the work of vital religion begun in his heart. He is awake from the ſleep of thoughtleſſneſs and indolence: he is ſolicitous to know his own ſtate, and hath good hope through grace: he lives in the view of heavenly things, and keeps his eye open to future and eternal glories.—He is awake from the ſleep of ſecurity: he is upon his guard againſt every danger, and ready to receive every alarm: he is awake from the ſleep of ſlothfulneſs, and is active in the purſuit of the glory of his God, and his own eternal intereſt, and ſtill preſſes toward the mark to obtain the prize. This is the ſoul that is ready to meet a returning Saviour, and to meet his Lord when he comes, either at the hour of death, or to the gene-

tal judgment. He hath endeavoured to ſecure to himſelf an intereſt in the love of God through the faith and love of Jeſus the bleſſed Mediator; and at death he is fixed for ever in their love. He hath loved God in time, and in this viſible world, and there is nothing in all the unſeen worlds, nothing through all the ages of eternity, ſhall ever ſeparate him from the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus his Lord. How dangerous and unhappy are the circumſtances of thoſe whom we hope have begun religion in good earneſt, and are made ſpiritually alive, but have indulged themſelves in drowſineſs, and worn out the latter end of their days in a careleſs, ſecure, and ſlothful frame. If they have had the principle of vital religion wrought in their hearts, yet by theſe criminal ſlumbers they darken or loſe their evidences of grace; and by this means they cut themſelves off from the ſweet reflections and comforts of it on a dying bed,

when they have moſt need of them. They know not whether they are the children of God or no, and are in anxious confuſion and diſtreſſing fear. They have ſcarce any plain proof of their converſion to God, and the evidences of true Chriſtianity ready at hand, when all are little enough to ſupport their ſpirits. They have not uſed themſelves to ſearch for them by ſelf-inquiry, and to keep them in ſight, and therefore they are miſſing in this important hour. They have given too great and criminal an indulgence to the vain and worldly cares, or the trifling amuſements of this life. Theſe have engroſſed almoſt all their thoughts and their time, and therefore in the day of death they fall under terrors and painful apprehenſions of a doubtful eternity juſt at hand. If we have not walked cloſely with God in this world, we may well be afraid to appear before him in the next. If we have not maintained a conſtant

converſe with Jeſus our Saviour, by holy exerciſes of faith and hope, it is no wonder, if we are not ſo ready with cheerfulneſs and joy to reſign our departing ſpirits into his hand. It is poſſible, we may have a right to the inheritance of heaven, having had ſome ſight of it by faith, as revealed in the goſpel, having in the main choſen it for our portion, and ſet our feet in the path of holineſs that leads to it; but we have ſo often wandered out of the way, that in this awful and ſolemn hour we ſhall be in doubt, whether we ſhall be received at the gate, and enter into the city.—Such unwatchful Chriſtians can never expect any peculiar favours from heaven at the hour of death: no ſpecial viſitations of the comforting Spirit; nor that the love of God and the joy of his preſence ſhould attend them through the dark valley; it is not to ſuch unwatchful or ſleepy Chriſtians that God is wont to vouchſafe his choiceſt conſolations.

The unwatchful Chriſtian at the hour of death has the pain and anguiſh of reflecting, that he has omitted many duties to God and man, and theſe can never be performed now. Alas! I have brought forth but little fruit to God, and it is well if I be not caſt away as an unprofitable ſervant. My talents have lain bound up in ruſt, or been but poorly employed, whilſt I have lain ſlumbering and inactive. The records of my life in the court of heaven will ſhew but very little ſervice for God amongſt men; I have raiſed few monuments of praiſe to my Redeemer, and I can never raiſe them now. I ſhall have but few teſtimonies for my love and zeal to appear in the great day of account, when the martyrs, and the confeſſors, and the lively Chriſtians, ſhall be ſurrounded with the lively enſigns of their victories over ſin and the world, and their glorious ſervices for their Redeemer.—Wretch that I am! that

I have loved my Lord at so cold a rate; and lain slumbering on a bed of ease, whilst I should have been fighting the battles of the Lord, and gaining daily honours for my Saviour.

As such sort of Christians give but little glory to God in life, so they do him no honour in death. They are no ornaments to religion while they continue here, and leave perhaps but little comfort with their friends when they go hence. It is a glory to the gospel when we can lie down, and die with courage in the hope of its promised blessedness; it is an honour to our common faith when it overcomes the terrors of death, and raises the Christian to a song of triumph in view of the last enemy. It is as a new crown put upon the head of our Redeemer, and a living cordial put into the hands of mourning friends in our dying hour, when we can take our leave of them with holy fortitude, rejoic-

ing in the ſalvation of Chriſt. No ſooner does he call, but we are ready to anſwer with holy tranſport, "Lord, I come;" this is a bleſſing that belongs only to the watchful Chriſtian. May every one of us be awake to ſalvation in our expiring moment, and partake of this glorious bleſſedneſs. Let us remember we have ſlept too long already in days paſt; and it is but a little while that we are called to watch: we have worn away too much of our life in ſloth and drowſineſs; it is now high time to awake out of ſleep, for now is our ſalvation nearer than when we firſt believed; another hour or two, and the night will be at an end with us.—Jeſus, the morning ſtar, is juſt appearing; what, can we not watch one hour? O happy ſouls, that keep themſelves awake to God in the midſt of this dreaming world! Happy indeed when our Lord ſhall call us out of theſe duſky regions, and we ſhall anſwer his call with

holy joy, and ſpring upward to the inheritance of the ſaints in light! Then all the ſeaſons of darkneſs and ſlumbering will be finiſhed for ever; there is no want of the ſun-beam to make their day-light, or to irradiate that city! The glory of God enlightens it with divine ſplendors, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

A HYMN.

YE ſervants of the Lord,
Each in his office wait,
Obſervant of his heavenly word,
And watchful at his gate.

II.

Let all your lamps be bright,
And trim the golden flame;
Gird up your loins as in his ſight,
For awful is his name.

III.

Watch, 'tis your Lord's command;
And while we ſpeak he's near;

Mark the first signal of his hand,
And ready all appear.

IV.

O happy servant he,
In such a posture found!
He shall his Lord with rapture see,
And be with honour crown'd.

V.

Christ shall the banquet spread
With his own royal hand,
And raise that favourite servant's head
Amidst th' angelic band.

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2 Thess. i. 10.

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.

HOW mean and contemptible soever our Lord Jesus Christ might appear heretofore on earth, yet there is a day coming when he shall make

a glorious figure in the ſight of men and angels.

How little ſoever the ſaints may be eſteemed in our day, and look poor and deſpicable in an ungodly world, yet there is an hour approaching when they ſhall be glorious beyond all imagination; and Chriſt himſelf ſhall be glorified in them. In that day ſhall the Lord our Saviour be the object of adoration and wonder; not only among thoſe of the ſons of men that have believed on him, but before all the intellectual creation, and that upon the account of his grace manifeſted in believers. What a matter of pleaſing wonder is it, that perſons of all characters ſhould have been united in one faith, and perſuaded to truſt in the ſame Saviour, and embrace the ſame ſalvation; for ſome of all ſorts ſhall ſtand in that bleſſed aſſembly. Then it ſhall be a fruitful ſpring of wonder and glory, that men of various nations and ages, of

different tempers, capacities, and intereſts, of contrary educations and contrary prejudices, ſhould believe one goſpel, and truſt in one deliverer from hell and death: that the ſprightly, the ſtudious, and the ſtupid, the wiſe and the fooliſh, ſhould reliſh and rejoice in the ſame ſublime truths; not only concerning the true God, but alſo concerning Jeſus the Redeemer; that the Barbarian and the Roman, the Greek and the Jew, ſhould approve and receive the ſame doctrines of ſalvation, that they ſhould come into the ſame ſentiments in the matters of religion, and live upon them as their only hope. It is a matter of wonder to us now on earth, that the bleſſed Son of God, who is one with the Father, ſhould ſtoop ſo low as to unite himſelf to a mortal nature, that he ſhould become a poor deſpicable man, and paſs through a life of ſufferings and ſorrows, and die an accurſed death, to redeem us from guilt and deſerved

niſery. But when we ſhall ſee him n his native glory and luſtre, his cquired dignities and all the ho- nours of heaven heaped upon him, t will raiſe our wonder high to hink that ſuch a one ſhould once umble himſelf to the death of the roſs, that he might ſave our ſouls rom dying. Then ſhall the multi- ude of the ſaved join in that ſong, " To him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever. Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain o receive power, and riches, and nonour, for thou haſt redeemed us with thy blood from every kindred, tribe, and nation." Chriſt ſhall be admired in that day, when his ſaints ſhall appear as ſo many images of his perſon, and as ſo many monu- ments of the ſucceſs of his office. Is the bleſſed Jeſus a great prophet, and the teacher of his church? Theſe are the perſons that have learned his divine doctrines. They have heard

the joyful ſound of his goſpel; and the holy truths of it are copied out in their hearts; theſe are the diſciples of his ſchool; and by his word, and by his Spirit, they have been taught to know God and their Saviour, and they have been trained up in the way to eternal life.

Is Jeſus a great high-prieſt both of ſacrifice and interceſſion? Behold all theſe ſouls, an endleſs number, purified from their defilements by the blood of his croſs; waſhed and made white in that bleſſed laver, and reconciled to God by his atoning ſacrifice. Behold the power of his interceſſion in ſecuring millions from the wrath of God, and in procuring for them every divine bleſſing. He hath obtained for each of them grace and glory.

Is Jeſus the Lord of all things, and the king of his church? Behold his ſubjects waiting on him, a numerous and a loyal multitude, who have the laws of their king engraven

n their ſouls; theſe are the ſons nd daughters of Adam, whom he as reſcued by his power from the ingdom of darkneſs and the hands f the devil. He has guarded them rom the rage of their malicious ad- erſaries in earth and hell, and rought them ſafe through all diffi- ulties to behold the glories of that lay, and to celebrate the honours of heir king.

Is he the captain of ſalvation? See what a bleſſed army he has liſted nder his banner of love, and they ave followed him through all the angers of life and time under his conduct. Theſe are the choſen, the called, the faithful. They have ſuſ- ained many a ſharp conflict, many a dreadful battle, and they are at laſt made more than conquerors through him that has loved them. They at- ribute all their victories to the wiſ- dom, the goodneſs, and the power of their divine Leader, and even ſtand amazed at their own ſucceſs

againſt ſuch mighty adverſaries: but they fought under the banner, conduct, and influence of the Prince of Life, the King of Righteouſneſs, who is always victorious, and has a crown in his hand for every conqueror.

Is Jeſus the great example of his ſaints? Behold the virtues and graces of the Son of God copied out in all his followers; as he was, ſo were they in this world, holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners. As he is, ſo are they glorious in holineſs and divinely beautiful. While each of them reflects the image of their bleſſed Lord, and they appear as wonders to all the beholding world. They were unknown here on earth, even as Chriſt himſelf was unknown. This is the day appointed to reveal their works, and their grace. Jeſus is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon; and all the ſons and daughters of God ſhall

then appear as ſo many pictures of the bleſſed Jeſus, drawn by the finger of the eternal Spirit.

When the great appointed hour is come, and Jeſus ſhall return from heaven with a ſhout of the archangel, and the trump of God; when he ſhall call up his ſaints from their bed of duſt and darkneſs, and make the graves reſign thoſe priſoners of hope; when they ſhall all gather together around their Lord, a bright and numerous army ſhining and reflecting the ſplendors of his preſence, how will the judgment of fleſh and ſenſe be confounded at once, and reverſed with ſhame!

Is this the man that was loaded with ſcandal, that was buffeted with ſcorn, and ſcourged, and crucified in the land of Judea? Is this the perſon that hung on the curſed tree, and expired under agonies of pain and ſorrow? Amazing ſight! how majeſtic, how divine his appearance! The Son of God and the King of

Glory! And are these the men that were made the mockery of the world? that wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, in dens and caves of the earth? Surprising appearance! How illustrious! how full of glory! O that such a meditation might awaken us to judge more by faith!

O my soul, do I hope to make one in that splendid retinue of my Lord? where every one must appear in robes of holiness: and shall I spot my garments with the flesh, when I am provoked to anger and indignation?—Let me say, doth wrath and bluster become a follower, and an attendant of the meek and peaceful Jesus? When I am tempted to pride and vanity of mind, will this be a beauty or a blemish to that assembly, that shines in glorious humility; or perhaps I am wavering, and ready to yield, and become a captive to some foolish temptation. But how then can I expect a place in that holy tri-

umph, which is appointed for none but conquerors; and how ſhall I be able to look my bleſſed General in the face on that day, if I prove a coward under his banner, and abandon my profeſſion of ſtrict holineſs at the demand of a ſinful and threatening world.

What comfort does this ſubject afford to thoſe who mourn for the diſhonour of Chriſt in the world, who ſympathize with their bleſſed Saviour under all the reproaches that are caſt upon him and his goſpel? Bear up your hearts, ye mourners, and ſupport your hopes with the promiſe of our Lord a little while, and ye ſhall ſee the Son of man ſitting on the throne of his glory. Then ſhall your hearts rejoice in his honour and in your own, and this joy no man taketh from you; and while he repeats this promiſe with his laſt words in the Bible; "Surely I come quickly," let every ſoul of us echo to the voice of our be-

loved, Amen! Even so come Lord Jesus!

A HYMN.

Ye heavens, with sounds of triumphring;
Ye angels, burst into a song:
Jesus descends, victorious King,
And leads his shining train along.

II.

Ye saints that sleep in dust, arise;
Let joy re-animate your clay;
Spring to your Saviour thro' the skies,
And round his throne your homage pay.

III.

Then let the sons of heaven draw nigh,
While to th' astonish'd host you tell,
How feeble mortals rose so high
From graves and worms, from sin and hell.

IV.

Tell them, in accents like their own,
What an incarnate God could do;
Then point to Jesus on the throne,
And boast, that Jesus died for you.

V.

Transported they no more can hear,
Their voices catch the sacred name;
Harmonious to his Father's ear,
Jesus the God, their harps proclaim.

VI.

Sin hath its dire incursions made,
That thou might'st prove thy power to save;
And death its ensigns wide display'd,
That thou might'st triumph o'er the grave.

Rev. xiv. 17.

——— *For the great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand?*

HOW ſtrangely, O my ſoul, do all the appearances of Chriſt to ſinners, in the ſeveral ſeaſons and diſpenſations of his grace, differ from that laſt great and ſolemn appearance, which to them will be a diſpenſation of final vengeance? He viſited the world in divine viſions of old, even from the day of the ſin of Adam; and it was to reveal mercy to ſinful man; and he ſometimes aſſumed the majeſty of God, to let the world know he was not to be trifled with. He viſited the earth at his incarnation; how lowly was his ſtate, how full of grace his miniſtry! yet he then gave notice of this day of vengeance, when he ſhould appear in his own and his

Father's glory. He viſits the nations now with the word of ſalvation: he appears in the glaſs of his goſpel, and in the ordinances of his ſanctuary, as a Saviour whoſe heart melts with love; and in the language of his tendereſt compaſſions, and of his dying groans, he invites ſinners to be reconciled to an offended God: he appears as a lamb made a ſacrifice for ſin, and as a miniſter of his Father's mercy, offering and diſtributing pardons to criminals: but when he viſits the world as a final judge, how ſolemn and illuſtrious will that appearance be! How terrible his countenance to all thoſe who have refuſed to receive him as a Saviour! Behold he cometh in flaming fire, with ten thouſand of his angels, to render vengeance to them that reſiſted his grace, and diſobeyed the invitations of his goſpel. Time was when the Father ſent forth his Son not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might have

life; but the time is coming when God ſhall ſend him arrayed with majeſty and with righteous indignation, to condemn the rebellious world, and inflict upon them the pains of eternal death.

Look forward, O my ſoul, to this awful and dreadful hour; ſurvey this tremendous ſcene of confuſion, when ſinners ſhall run counter to all their former principles and wiſhes, and paſs a quite different judgment upon their ſinful delights from what they were wont to do in the days of this life of vanity. How great and dreadful muſt the diſtreſs of creatures be when they cannot endure to ſee the face of God their Creator! How terrible muſt be the circumſtances of the ſons of men, when they cannot endure to ſee the face of the Son of God, but would fain hide themſelves from the ſight under rocks and mountains! How wretched muſt their ſtate be, who avoid the face of the bleſſed God with horror,

which the holy angels ever behold with moſt intenſe delight; and which the ſaints rejoice in as their higheſt happineſs. It is their heaven to ſee God, and behold the glory of his Son Jeſus; but this is the very hell of ſinners; in that dreadful hour they fly from that bleſſed countenance, which is the ornament and the joy of all the holy and happy creation.

And what ſhall I do, if I ſhould be found among this criminal number in that great day? If I look at the wiſdom and righteouſneſs of God, theſe will reflect the keeneſt rays of horror and anguiſh upon my ſoul; for it is that wiſdom, and that righteouſneſs, that have joined to prepare the ſalvation which I have rejected; and therefore now that righteous God ſeeth proper and neceſſary to puniſh me with everlaſting ſorrows. If I look at his goodneſs or his love, it is love and goodneſs that I have deſpiſed and abuſed, and it is now changed into divine

fury. I ſhall neither be able to bear the ſight of God or of his faireſt copy, that is, Jeſus his Son; becauſe I am ſo ſhamefully unlike them both; and beſides have affronted their majeſty and deſpiſed their mercy. How painful and ſmarting will be the reflection of my heart in that day, when I ſhall remember that Jeſus called out to me from heaven by the meſſengers of his grace, and ſaid, Behold, behold me, look unto me from the ends of the earth, and be ſaved! But now he is armed with a commiſſion of vengeance, and he ſtrikes terror and exquiſite pain into my ſoul with every frown, ſo that I ſhall wiſh to be for ever hid from the face of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to endure his wrath? to ſtand before his thunder, or bear the lightning of this day? Alas! how miſerable muſt I be by an everlaſting neceſſity, if I cannot bear the countenance of my

God and Christ, which is the spring of unchanging happiness to all the saints and the blessed angels. Oh! may I timely secure the love of my God, and gain an interest in the favour and salvation of the blessed Jesus! Here, O Lord, at thy foot I lay down all the weapons of my former rebellions; I implore thy love through the interest of thy Son the great Mediator. Let me see the light of thy countenance, and the smiles of thy face; let me see a reconciled God, and let him tell me that my sins are all forgiven; then shall I not be afraid to meet the countenance of him that sits upon the throne, or the Lamb, when Christ shall return from heaven to punish the impenitent rebels against divine grace.

Of what infinite importance is it to sinners to gain an humble acquaintance and friendship with the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, that we may be

able with comfort to behold the face of him that ſits on the throne in that day. Which of us has the courage and hardineſs to declare, I have no need of a Saviour? Have we not yet fled for refuge to Jeſus our only and ſufficient hope? O how ſolicitous ſhould every ſoul be in a matter of this divine moment, this everlaſting importance.

On the other hand, how happy are the circumſtances of true Chriſtians, in that day of terror? Behold the judge appears; he cometh in the clouds ſurrounded with armies of avenging angels, the miniſters of his indignation; he rideth on a chariot of flaming fire, the earth with all its mountains melt like wax at the preſence of the Lord. The rocks are broken, and ſhivered at the appearance of his majeſty; the tombs are thrown open, and with terrible diſmay ſhall the graves give up their dead. Amidſt all theſe ſcenes of ſurpriſe and horror, with how ſerene

countenance, and how peaceful a ſoul, do the ſaints awake from their beds of earth! calm and ſerene among all theſe confuſions, they riſe from their long ſlumber, and go to meet their returning Saviour and friend. They have ſeen him in the glaſs of his goſpel, ſubmitted to his laws, and rejoiced in his grace; and they now delight to ſee him face to face in his glory: they have ſeen him veſted with his commiſſion of mercy, they have heard and received his meſſage of goodneſs and love; and they cannot but rejoice to ſee him coming to fulfil his laſt promiſe. They have cheerfully ſubjected themſelves to his government here on earth; they have followed him in paths of holineſs through the wilderneſs of this world, and what remains but that they be publicly acknowledged by Jeſus the judge of all, and follow him up to the place of bleſſedneſs, which he hath prepared for them. He is come, he is come,

ſaith the ſaint, even that Lord Jeſus whom I have ſeen, whom I have known, and loved in the days of my mortal life; whom I have long waited for in the duſt of death; he is come to reward all my labours, to wipe away all my ſorrows, to finiſh my faith, and turn it into ſight, to fulfil all my hopes and his own promiſes: he is come to deliver me from all my enemies, and to bear me to the place which he has prepared for thoſe that love him, and long for his appearance.

O bleſſed be the God of grace, who hath convinced me of the ſins of nature, and the ſins of my life in the days of my fleſh, and hath ſhewn me the commiſſion of mercy, in the hands of his Son, hath pointed me to the Lamb of God, and inclined me to follow the captain of my ſalvation through all the labours and dangers of life. I have truſted in him; I have loved him; I have endeavoured, though under many

frailties, to honour and obey him, and I can now behold his face without terror, while the mighty men of the earth tremble with amazement, and call to the rocks and mountains to hide them from his face. I rejoice to see him in his robes of judgment; for he is come to pronounce me righteous in the face of men and angels, and to declare me a good and faithful servant before the whole creation, to set the crown of victory on my head, and to take me to heaven with him, that where he is I may be also; to behold his glory and to partake for ever of the blessings of his love. Amen.

A HYMN.

And will the Judge descend,
And must the dead arise?
And not a single soul escape
His all-discerning eyes?

II.

And from his righteous lips
Shall this dread ſentence ſound,
And through the numerous guilty throng,
Spread black deſpair around?

III.

Depart from me accurſed,
To everlaſting flame,
For rebel angels firſt prepared,
Where mercy never came.

IV.

How will my heart endure
The terrors of that day,
When earth and heaven before his face
Aſtoniſhed ſhrink away?

V.

But e'er that trumpet ſhakes
The manſions of the dead,
Hark from the goſpel's cheering ſound,
What joyful tidings ſpread!

VI.

Ye ſinners, ſeek his grace,
Whoſe wrath ye cannot bear;
Fly to the ſhelter of his croſs,
And find ſalvation there.

VII.

So ſhall the curſe remove,
By which the Saviour bled,
And the laſt awful day ſhall pour
His bleſſings on our head.

A Soul prepared for Heaven.

2 Cor. v. 5.

Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing is God.

SINCE we are ſinful and guilty creatures in ourſelves, and have forfeited all our pretences to the favour of God and happineſs, we muſt be reſtored to his favour; we muſt have our ſins forgiven; we muſt be ſanctified in his ſight; we muſt be

adopted as the children of God, and have a right and title given us to the heavenly inheritance, before we can enter into it or poſſeſs it: and this bleſſing is procured for us by the obedience and death of the Son of God.

But our principal inquiry at preſent is, what are thoſe ſteps, or gradual operations by which the bleſſed God works us up to this fitneſs for heaven. He makes us meet for the heavenly felicity, by eſtabliſhing and confirming our belief, that there is a heaven provided for the ſaints; and by giving us ſome clearer acquaintance with the nature, the buſineſs, and the bleſſedneſs of this heaven. By giving them a full conviction and aſſurance of the truth of all theſe divine diſcoveries he impreſſes them upon their hearts with power, and makes them attend to thoſe divine impreſſions. Every true Chriſtian has learned to ſay within himſelf, this celeſtial bleſſedneſs is no dream,

is no painted vision, or matter of uncertain opinion: I am assured of it from the words of Christ the Son of God, and from his blessed followers. He that is taught of God beholds these glories in the light of a divine faith, which is to him the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not yet seen.

God works up the souls of his people to a preparation for the heavenly state, by purifying them from every defilement, that might unfit them for the blessedness of heaven. Nothing that defileth must enter into the city of our God on high. It is not only a conscience purged from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ, but a soul washed also from the defiling power and taint of sin by the sanctifying Spirit, that is necessary to make us meet for the heavenly inheritance. To stand upon the borders of life, and the very edge of eternity, will be dreadful to those who have given themselves a loose to criminal plea-

fures, and indulged their irregular appetites and paſſions. There is a great deal of purifying work to be done in the ſouls of all of us, before we can be prepared for the heavenly world; and though we cannot arrive at perfection here, yet we muſt be wrought up to a temper, in ſome meaſure, fit to enter into that bleſſedneſs. Happy ſouls, who feel themſelves more and more releaſed from the bonds of their iniquities day by day, and thereby feel within themſelves the growing evidences of a joyful hope!

God does not only purify us from every ſin in order to prepare us for heaven, but he is ever looſening and weaning our hearts from all thoſe lawful things in this life which are not to be enjoyed in heaven. The buſineſſes, the cares and the concerns of this ſecular life, are ready to drink up our ſpirits too much while we are here, we are too prone to mingle our very ſouls with them

and thereby grow unfit for heavenly felicities; and therefore it is that our Saviour has warned us, Let not your hearts be overcharged with the cares of this world, any more than with surfeiting and drunkenness, if you would be always ready for your flight to a better state, and meet the summons of your Lord to paradise.

The great God not only weans our hearts from those things that are not to be enjoyed in heaven, but he gives us a holy appetite and relish, suited to the provisions of the heavenly world, and raises our desires and tendencies of soul toward them. By nature our minds are estranged from God, and from all that is divine and holy; we have no desire after his love, nor delight in the thoughts of dwelling with God. But when divine grace has effectually touched the heart, it ever tends upwards to that world of holiness and peace: so the needle, when it is touched by the loadstone, ever points to the beloved

polar ſtar, and ſeems uneaſy when it is diverted from it, nor will it reſt till it return thither again.

Do the ſweet ſenſations of divine love make up a great part of the heavenly bleſſedneſs? The ſoul is in ſome meaſure fitted for it, who can ſay with David, Lord, lift thou up upon me the light of thy countenance, and it ſhall rejoice my heart more than if all earthly bleſſings were multiplied upon me; for in thy love is the life of my ſoul, and thy loving kindneſs is better than life. Whom have I in heaven but thee? Neither is there any on earth that I deſire beſide thee. When ſhall I have finiſhed my travels through this wilderneſs, that I may arrive at my Father's houſe? O when ſhall the day come, when there ſhall be no more diſtance and eſtrangement of my heart from God, but I ſhall feel all my powers for ever near him.

Is the ſweet ſociety of Jeſus to be enjoyed in the heavenly region?

Then thoſe are prepared for this happineſs who feel in themſelves a deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt. I am willing and rejoice in the thought of it, rather to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord. I behold in the light of faith, the dawning glory of that day, when Jeſus ſhall return to our world, not to be made a ſacrifice for ſin, but to complete our ſalvation; I long to behold him, and I love the thought of his appearance.

The bleſſed God is pleaſed to work us up to a preparation for the heavenly world, by forming the temper of our minds into a likeneſs to the inhabitants of heaven, that is, to God himſelf, to Chriſt Jeſus the Son of God, and to the ſpirits of the juſt made perfect. Happy ſouls! who can ſay through grace, I have walked in the light, as God is in the light, and I truſt, O Father, I ſhall dwell for ever with thee there.—I have been a follower of the Lamb through

the thorny, and rugged paſſages of this wilderneſs; and I humbly hope I ſhall ſit with thee, O Jeſus, upon a throne glorious and holy! I have been a companion of them, who have finiſhed the Chriſtian race, who have fought the good fight, and obtained the victory; and I truſt I ſhall have a name and a place amongſt all you holy ones, who have fought and overcome. O for a heart and a tongue furniſhed for ſuch appeals to all the bleſſed inhabitants of paradiſe, the poſſeſſors of thoſe manſions on high!

Hence we learn what are the plaineſt evidences of our intereſt in the heavenly bleſſedneſs. Are we trained up to it, and prepared for it? Has the bleſſed God wrought up our ſouls to any hopeful degrees of this preparation? Let us inquire of our ſouls, am I ſo fully perſuaded of this ſtate of future happineſs, as to reſolve this ſhall be my aim? this my everlaſting purſuit? And have

we ſet our faces to travel thither, with an holy purpoſe and determination, through grace, never to tire or grow weary, till we arrive at the enjoyment of it? Have we fixed our hope and expectation upon the bleſſed promiſes in the word? and are we by theſe endeavouring to cleanſe ourſelves from all defilement of fleſh and ſpirit, and to perfect holineſs in the fear of God? Do we obtain any victories over our ſpiritual enemies, and maintain our pious conflicts againſt all the oppoſitions which we meet with in our way? Do we labour to ſuppreſs every riſing ferment of envy, pride, wrath, ſenſuality, and thoſe corrupt appetites and paſſions which render us unfit for that holy and heavenly world? Are our hearts daily more mortified to the things of this world? Do we view the tempting things of this world with a holy indifference, and poſſeſs and uſe them with affections ſo calm and ſo cool as becomes

beings that have a nobler and more exalted hope? Have we found the labours and afflictions of the preſent ſtate happy inſtruments to prepare us for the bleſſedneſs above, by curing all our vain and carnal deſires? Have we the image of our heavenly Father created anew in us? And do we walk as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt walked? Do we employ ourſelves with pleaſure in the work and buſineſs of heaven? In the holy contemplation of God? In a delightful ſurvey of the perſon and offices of his Son Jeſus? Do we take pleaſure in converſing with God, by holy addreſſes of praiſe and thankfulneſs? Do we love all the ſaints, and delight in their ſociety? and do we diffuſe our love through all who wear the image of God, and take a pleaſing ſatisfaction of ſoul in their increaſe of holineſs, and rejoice in their joys? If God has thus fitted us for the manſions of the happy world, we have no need to ſearch for our evi-

dences among the decrees of God, and to pry into the rolls of electing grace: for if we have been transformed into a heavenly temper, our names are surely written in the Lamb's book of life. Heaven is begun with us, and God will fulfil his own work.

What a solid comfort is it to poor, mourning, troubled, afflicted souls, under all their sorrows, infirmities, and temptations here on earth, that they have a clear evidence of heaven within them! This is such a peace as Christ left to his disciples by legacy, such as the world cannot give nor take away. It may be, O Christian, thou art afraid thou hast felt but little of this divine preparation, thou seest so many defects in thyself daily, so much unlikeness to God, so much working of iniquity, so much prevalence of temptation, so much coldness in duty, and so many enemies to struggle with every step of thy way to heaven, that thou art

greatly discouraged and afraid this divine preparation is not wrought in thee. Inquire then yet further; are all these melancholy scenes, both within and without, the matter of thy sincere grief and burden? Canst thou say, in this tabernacle I groan, being burdened with the body of sin, as well as with the frailties and pains of nature? Canst thou say sincerely, that thy inmost desires are towards God and his glory in the present life; and towards his enjoyment in the world to come? Dost thou maintain a constant converse with heaven as well as thou canst, though it be so much broken, and so often painfully interrupted? Hast thou a settled aversion to sin, and a holy jealousy and fear of its defilements? Hast thou a restless breathing of soul after greater likeness to God, and communion with him? And does thy zeal for the honour of God and his Son Jesus carry thee forth to those actions which are suitable to thy sta-

tion, for the advancement of religion in the world? Be assured then, that God is training thee up for this heavenly state, and has in some measure prepared thee for it. Happy creature, whatever pains you have taken, whatever conflicts you have endured in the matter of your salvation, yet let God and his grace have all the honour of this work. It was he who first awakened you, and set you a thinking of your most important concerns. It was he that led you first into the way of salvation by Jesus Christ his Son; and hath thus far crowned your labours and your prayers with success. It is he that hath upheld you when you were falling, and hath enabled you to maintain your conflict with all the mighty obstacles of your faith and hope. It is his grace which hath renewed your nature, hath weaned you from this vain flattering world, and given you a sacred relish of divine blessedness. Call up all your

powers to praiſe his goodneſs; and ſay, Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy name! It is God who hath taken me out of the family of ſin and Satan, and given me a place among his children: who hath begun to prepare me for the joys of heaven; and in his own time he will fulfil all my hopes, and complete my felicity. Amen.

A HYMN.

ALL glorious God, what hymns of praiſe
Shall our tranſported voices raiſe?
What flaming love and zeal are due,
While heaven ſtands open to our view?

II.

Once we were fallen, and O how low!
Juſt on the brink of endleſs woe;
Doom'd to an heritage in hell,
Where ſinners all in darkneſs dwell.

III.

But lo, a ray of chearing light
Scatters the horrid ſhades of night,
Lo what triumphant grace is ſhewn,
To ſouls impoveriſhed and undone!

IV.

Far, far beyond theſe mortal ſhores,
A bright inheritance is ours;
Where ſaints in light our coming wait,
To ſhare their holy bliſsful ſtate.

V.

If ready dreſs'd for heaven we ſhine,
Thine are the robes, the crown is thine;
May endleſs years their courſe prolong,
And, "Thine the praiſe," be all the ſong.

On the Love of God.

WHAT ſhall I do to become a lover of God? Since I know there is but one God, I would give up my whole heart to him alone; I would fain have him reign in my affections ſupreme, and without a rival: but let me recollect myſelf a little, and not deny what God and his grace have wrought in my ſoul. Do I not love him ſincerely and above all things? Have I not beheld him as the firſt and the beſt of beings? Have I not been taught to ſee the vanity and emptineſs of all things beneath and beſides God, and that without him I can never arrive at true happineſs? Has he not the moſt tranſcendant place in my eſteem? Yes, O Lord, through thy grace, I can ſay the creatures are nothing in compariſon of thee! Nor can any thing appear in my eyes

more lovely and desirable than God and his love.

Again, have I not been invited and raised by thy grace to some humble hope of thy favour? Hast thou not revealed thyself in thy word, as a God condescending to be reconciled to sinners? willing to be reconciled to me? as a God willing to make creatures happy, even every creature that desires to center itself in God, and take up its rest in him? O that sublime, that most excellent, that supreme being, the holy and blessed God! How merciful! how compassionate! have I not seen him in his word, descending within the reach of my hope? And have I not rejoiced to think that he gives me leave to hope in him, as an eternal portion for my soul; and that he holds out the arm of his love to receive me? May I not proceed yet further, O my God? Has not my will been drawn powerfully toward thee, and made choice of thee as my

everlasting good? Have I not turned my back upon creatures at thy call, and divided myself from every thing that I might be more nearly united to thee? Have I not renounced them all that I might be entirely the Lord's? Does not my soul with firm purpose cleave to thee as my immortal portion and ever-during inheritance? Yet again, O my Lord, does not my heart sometimes go out after thee, with most pleasing sensations? O that I could say, it never wandered; but I humbly hope it will never be at rest while absent from God! Sometimes like the needle, that is feebly touched with the sovereign influence of the loadstone, it may be drawn aside by other influence, and it is too ready to wander from its beloved point: but may I not appeal to thee, O my God, that like the needle, it is ever restless till it point to thee again: to thee the object of my strongest desire and my supreme love.

Are not my flesh and spirit, with all their active powers, under the command of this divine principle, this holy fire of love. Does not this heavenly affection reign in my soul over all my faculties, all my senses, and all my passions? Are not all my little affairs in this world, and all my more important concerns, regulated and governed by this holy love? Canst thou bear the thought, O my soul, of acting contrary to this inward, vital, and reigning principle? Are not all my mortal interests subdued, and devoted to divine love? Are not all my immortal interests united and summed up in it? Whom have I in heaven, O Lord, but thee! and what is there on earth that I desire in comparison of thee! These eyes of mine, whither shall they look but towards thee! What shall these hands do but the work which thou appointest them? What is there that my tongue is employed in with so much delight, as in speaking of thee, and

to thee, my Lord and my God? All that I am and all that I have is thine for ever? Am I not then a ſincere lover? Bleſſed be the name of Jeſus, the Son of God and my Saviour, that has deſcended from heaven to dwell with duſt and aſhes, that he might bring ſuch worthleſs wretches as we are within the attractive force of divine love! Our ſins ſtood between God and man like a wall of dreadful ſeparation: but by his glorious atonement he has removed the bar, and made the way of acceſs to God free and open; that God and man might be united in the bond of perpetual love. He called ſinners by his own voice, and he calls them ſtill by the word of his goſpel, to partake of this privilege. O bleſſed Meſſenger of divine love! and he ſends down his own Spirit from heaven, where he dwells, to make us willing to partake of this felicity, and to draw our hearts nearer to God. Come, O divine Spirit

come, dwell in this heart of mine as an unchanging principle of holy love; guard my heart from all meaner allurements and influences, while I am travelling through the dangerous region of this world, till I am arrived beyond the reach of danger, till I rest for ever in the bosom of God, my supreme love and everlasting all.

IT is time, O my soul, to call thy thoughts away from the multitude of mankind, and to look carefully into thyself. There is reason enough for grief and lamentation indeed, if we survey the thousands round about us, who are mere slaves to their earthly passions, who let them loose among creatures, and shew very few tokens and evidences of a supreme love to their Creator; but would it not be matter of far more painful, more penetrating, and in-

ward ſorrow, if thou ſhouldeſt hardly be able to prove thyſelf a lover of God. Awake, awake to the work, O my heart! inquire, examine, and take a ſtrict account how are thy paſſionate powers employed? Go over thy various affections, and inquire of all of them, how ſtands thy love to God? Admiration is deſcribed as the firſt of the paſſions; it ariſes on the notice of ſomething new and uncommon, but it never ceaſes, nor is loſt in the contemplation of God, whoſe glories are infinite, and in whom the holy ſoul always finds ſomething new and wondrous.

Haſt thou ſeen him, my ſoul, ſo as to love him? Then thy work of pleaſing contemplation and wonder will be ſtill renewed: among creatures we go on to admire what we love; but the love of the Creator will lead us to everlaſting admiration. Aſk thyſelf, haſt thou ſeen the glories and the graces of thy God, ſo as to wonder at the infinite

variety of his wisdom, the greatness of his majesty, and the condescensions of his mercy? Are his displays of glory in nature and providence, in the Bible, and in the church, and especially in his beloved Son Jesus, the matter of thy joyful meditation and high esteem? But proceed now, and ask how stand thy desires and wishes? Is the favour, the presence, and the enjoyment of God, the object of thy strongest desires, and of thy constant pursuit? Dost thou long after a sense of the pardon of sin, the love of God, and a preparation to dwell for ever with him above all things besides? Yet further inquire, what is thy heart's chief delight? Are those the sweetest seasons of life when thou art brought nearest to God in the temper of thy spirit, in the lively hope of his love, and in humble converse with him? Are the secret hours of retirement dear and delightful to thee above all human society? Can it be that ever

I ſhall love God ſupremely, and yet not find my converſe with him to be my ſupreme joy?

Again, are the things that relate to God and eternity the objects of my choice and love, above and beyond the things that relate to men and this life? What value haſt thou, O my ſoul, for the Bible, the book of God? His words will be treaſured up in the heart, and will become the ſweet entertainment of thy ſolitary hours, if God himſelf has the higheſt room in thy affections. Let me inquire how ſtand my deſires towards the ſanctuary, toward the places and ſeaſons of divine worſhip? Are the courts of Zion my delight, becauſe the bleſſed God manifeſts his power and glory there? Do I love the ſaints of God? Is the company of lively Chriſtians refreſhing and entertaining to me above all the idle diſcourſe of the world, or the vain merriments, or more polite amuſements of the age? Do I look

upon the children of God with a peculiar reſpect, with an eye of diſtinguiſhing love? and that for this reaſon, becauſe they ſtand related to God, and bear his image? Do I feel a ſympathy with them in their ſorrows? Do I pity and relieve from my very heart the poor in this world, who are the ſons and daughters of the moſt high God? and is Jeſus, the ſupreme Son of God, the higheſt in my eſteem and the deareſt to my heart? Inquire yet again, does thy love to God awaken, and employ thy zeal and holy activity for his honour? Art thou ſolicitous to keep all his commandments, and hereby manifeſt thy love? There is no evidence of the love of God can be ſufficient or ſincere if this be wanting.

Doſt thou ſeek to grow more and more like to God? Doſt thou breathe earneſtly after greater conformity to Jeſus the firſt and brighteſt image of the Father? Is it a pain

to thee to find thyself so unlike him whom thou lovest supremely? Love will create likeness.

Let us examine thee now, my heart; how stand thy uneasy and painful affections? Hast thou a rooted hatred of every sin? Dost thou look back on thy own former transgressions with lowly shame and sincere sorrow? Are thy sins thy heaviest burden? Has thy unfeigned repentance been manifested by all the proper passions that attend a penitent? by self-abasement and inward confusion? By mourning in secret, and a holy displacency and resentment against thyself and thy folly? And is it a grief and pain to thee, to see and hear others transgress against thy God, and affront his law and his love?

Seek yet further; hast thou a watchful jealousy over thyself, lest thou wander from God? Dost thou stand afar off from every temptation, as one afraid to be defiled with sin,

and dishonour thy God? Art thou cautious of that company, of that business, or that diversion, which has before ensnared thee, and broken thy holy intercourse with God?

Ask again, O my heart! hast thou a submissive and humble carriage under hard providences, and sore disappointments from the hand of God? Dost thou love him so well as not to murmur at his holy conduct, nor quarrel with his government? And hast thou acquired the sacred skill of suppressing thy wrath against men, by the constraining influence of the love of God? If thy love to God has done little of this service, if it has not begun to make thee meek and mild, and dispassionate under afflictions from the hand of God, or the affronts of men, it has not acquired any great prevalence in thee, and there is too much reason to suspect the sincerity of it.

Come yet farther, O my soul! take a step forward, and look towards

death and eternity. Art thou willing to croſs the dark valley in order to dwell with thy beloved?

I grant nature has its frailties and fears. I grant alſo, that the want of aſſurance of ſalvation damps the wings of the ſoul, which would be ſtretched forward to the enjoyment of God in the heavenly country. I would put the queſtion therefore, in a gentle and favourable manner. Haſt thou any deſire to leave this ſinful world, to quit all thy deareſt hopes and intereſts here, for the ſake of dwelling with God on high? Suppoſe thou hadſt a ſteady hope of his love, and the pains of death were mitigated, haſt thou an inward breathing and tendency towards the happineſs that ariſes from the preſence of God? O bleſſed ſouls! whoſe love is riſen to ſo tranſcendent a degree that they are not afraid even of the ſharpeſt pangs, and the terrors of death! they can venture with pleaſure to croſs the ſwellings of Jordan,

that they may enter into the promiſed land, and dwell in the city of their God. What is it, O my ſoul, what is in the word Hell that ſtrikes thee with ſo much horror? is it the thought of an endleſs ſeparation from thy God? What is it that makes the name of Heaven carry ſo pleaſing a ſound? is it becauſe thy God dwells there in his faireſt glory, and in his richeſt grace? The mere dread of hell, as a place of ſorrow and pain, and the deſire of heaven, as a mere ſtate of reſt from trouble, and of ſome ſort of unknown happineſs, are no manner of evidences of any love to God; much leſs of a ſupreme love ſuch as God requires. The paſſions of nature may be awakened by natural ſelf-love at the views of heaven and hell, when ſet merely in this light; but it is the hope of being for ever with the Lord, that is the chief allurement of heaven, in the eye of the ſacred lover; and it is the eternal abſence of God

gives hell its blackeſt colours, and its moſt formidable appearances. Haſt thou, O my ſoul, run over all thy paſſions in this inquiry, and what is the reſult of thy labours? Canſt thou ſtand this teſt? Art thou a lover of God with all thy heart? If thou find this divine principle reigning within thee, bleſs the diſtinguiſhing grace of God, who has kindled this heavenly flame within thee, and cheriſh it with perpetual care: ſet a guard upon every affection, leſt it wander from its duty. O may divine love maintain its rightful dominion and univerſal ſovereignty in my ſoul! Let me keep God always near me, and watch againſt the ſeducing influences of tempting creatures, that I may ever preſerve the love of God in its ſupreme fervency, and its unrivalled influence. Then my whole nature, with all its powers, ſhall be thine, O my God, for ever and ever. Amen!

Meditation on divine Love.

THough I have learned ſo much of religion as to know it does ot conſiſt in vehement commotions f animal nature, in ſublime raptures nd extacies, yet ſince the various ffections of fear and hope, love and orrow, belong to my nature, I am ure they ought to be engaged in me meaſure in the ſervice of God nd religion.—What ſhall I do, O y God, to love thee more? How all I kindle this divine flame? I editate on the wonders of thy nature, e extent of thy goodneſs, and the ches of thy mercy, and yet how le do I love thee! I review the eet variety of bleſſings that I have ceived from thy hand in this life, d the ſurpriſing tranſactions of thy ndeſcending grace, which relate the life to come; and yet how le do I love thee! I behold Je- thy Son, ſent out of thy own

boſom, to take fleſh and blood, and to dwell among ſinners, even Jeſus the Son of thy higheſt love, ſent down to earth, to be made a ſacrifice, and to die for ſuch guilty wretches as I am. An amazing inſtance of thy love to us, and yet how little do I love thee! I wander in meditation through the various fields of nature and grace, and methinks I ſee my God in all of them, diffuſing the unbounded riches of his wiſdom and love through them all. I endeavour to take my warmeſt paſſions with me while I rove among the unknown ſcenes of thy power and goodneſs; and yet, O my God, after all, I am forced to confeſs how exceeding little it is, that I love thee! Lord, it is thy own work to turn a heart of ſtone into fleſh; to make it feel all the tender impreſſions of divine love, and to kindle the celeſtial principle of life and love within me.—Come down from on high, thou ſovereign of all nature, come

down into my heart, take poſſeſſion of it for thyſelf, and let it ever burn and breathe towards thee, and ſend up the perpetual incenſe of holy deſire and love. O may all the tempting trifles and vain delights of this life ſtand aloof from my heart, for I have devoted it to God for an habitation. Keep your diſtance, ye dangerous creatures, from the gates of this temple, where my God dwells. There let him dwell alone, and reign over all my powers for ever.

I would ſeek after my God in his public ordinances; I would ſeek after him daily in my ſecret retirements; I would give my pious paſſions a greater looſe, where no eye beholds me, where no ear can take notice of me. O may theſe retiring hours be the ſpecial ſeaſons for the lively exerciſe, and the increaſe of my devout affections. There I can tell my God all my heart in private groans and private rejoicings; he

ſhall know what my ſighs mean, what are my fears and my painful ſorrows. There I can bluſh before him for my ſecret ſins, and open the floods of holy mourning. There I can pour out into his ear my bitter complaints of the riſing corruptions of my heart. I can lament over the vanity of my thoughts, and ſpread my unknown temptations before his eyes. I can lay myſelf low at his feet in the duſt, and tell him, with humble confuſion of face and ſoul, how much I have received from him, how much I have done againſt him, and how little I have loved him.

In order to carry on this happy work, I am directed to converſe much with thoſe parts of Chriſtianity which are ſuited to raiſe the moſt ſprightly affections. I have done it, O Lord, and yet I feel my heart too little warmed and raiſed. But I would repeat the holy work: it is all duty, and it ſhould be all delight. I would repeat it till I find the ſacred

fire kindle and glow within. I would run over again that vaſt and extenſive field of wonder. Again, let me ſurvey the ſublime glories of thy majeſty, thy power, thy wiſdom, thy goodneſs, all-unſearchable, and all-infinite. I would dwell upon them till I am loſt in this boundleſs ocean of Godhead, and ſwallowed up in adoration and wonder. Then would I recall my paſt days of life, and bring paſt years back to my remembrance; with a ſacred ſolemnity would I revolve in my heart the multitude of my tranſgreſſions, and the multitude of divine mercies, till my ſoul be melted into repentance and love. There is an unknown pleaſure in the tears of pious love and holy mourning. I would read the aſtoniſhing hiſtory of the love of Chriſt, and trace the divine path of it down from his Father's boſom to his ſtate of infancy, to the manger and the ſtable at Bethlehem. I would follow this golden track of love through the weakneſſes, the fa-

tigues and ſorrows of a life of poverty and reproach. I would trace it on the midnight mountains of prayer, and through the ſolitary wilderneſs, the ſtage of his ſore temptation. I follow the ſhining thread of this unwearied love, till it brought him to ſuſtain unknown agonies in the garden, and nailed him to the curſed tree. I behold him there groaning and expiring under the weight of my ſins. Amazing ſpectacle! What will awaken devout paſſion, if ſuch varied ſcenes of divine love and divine ſorrow cannot do it? Let me borrow thoſe bleſſed patterns of warm and living devotion, which David has left us, and tune the ſongs of Zion to the name of Jeſus; the ſweeteſt ſongs, and the ſweeteſt name will happily unite, to increaſe the divine harmony. O for the return of the ſame ſpirit that gave the ſoul and the harp of David theſe ſacred and immortal elevations! When I find a divine influence reaching my heart, and raiſing a de-

vout paſſion there, I would hold faſt, and cheriſh the heavenly ſun-beam, till I feel the holy warmth diffuſed through all my powers. Nor would I willingly ſuffer the tides of buſineſs or care in this world to quench the ſpark which was kindled from above.

I would keep up the ſavour of divine things among the common affairs of this life: a preſent God in the midſt of the labours of this world will ſweeten and ſanctify them all, and bring heaven down to earth. Suffer me not, O my God, to bury all my religion within me; let my tongue communicate ſome of the wonders of thy mercy, and be the lively inſtrument of thy praiſe. Give courage and wiſdom, that I may know how, and when to detect vain diſcourſe, and may dare to ſpeak for God.—O when ſhall the time be that they which fear the Lord ſhall ſpeak often one to another, and warm each others hearts with heavenly

converſation. With all our pious endeavours, let us join our efforts of importunate requeſts for the return of the quickening Spirit and his vital influences. O that I might live much in the faith of unſeen things, and ſet myſelf continually as on the borders of death! Turn aſide the vail, O bleſſed Jeſus, that I may look into the unſeen world, or give the eyes of my faith vigour enough to pierce through the vail, and ſee my God and my Saviour! and may this bleſſed ſight make a divine impreſſion upon all the powers of my nature, ſuch as may awaken every vigorous and pleaſing paſſion of the heart; ſuch as may engage me to keep my hopes always awake, my evidences for heaven unſpotted, and my deſires ever breathing toward thy preſence, my Saviour and my God! If my pious paſſions were in their warmeſt exerciſe, I ſhould be ever ready to obey the divine order for my removal hence: I ſhould re-

ceive the meſſenger death with a ſmile on my countenance, and follow the angel with a cheerful ſtep, while he leads me away from a world of ſin, ſorrow, and darkneſs, to the regions of life and joy.

O happy country, where ſorrow and ſin have no place! There are no gloomy hours, no chilling blaſts, no cold and cloudy ſeaſons: there no damp ſhall hang upon the wing of my devout affection: no water ſhall ever quench the fervour of them. There I ſhall be for ever aſcending nearer to God, the center of my ſoul, and all my motions will be ſwifter too. Then ſhall I complain no longer of abſence and diſtance, nor feel any more eclipſe of the face of my God: but I ſhall be perpetually receiving a full efflux of light and love from the eternal Sun of grace and glory. Come, my ſoul, rouſe thyſelf from thy dull and lethargic temper, ſhake off the duſt of this earth, that hangs heavy upon

thy better powers. Haſt thou not been long weary of ſuch cold and frozen devotion as is practiſed in this earthly ſtate? Haſt thou not long complained of loving thy God ſo little, and of taſting ſo little of his love? Come, raiſe thyſelf above theſe dull and deſpicable ſcenes of fleſh and ſenſe, above all that is not immortal. Lift up thy head with cheerfulneſs and eager hope, look out with longing eyes beyond the ſhadowy regions of death, and ſalute the dawning of thy eternal day. Stretch out thy arms of intenſe deſire, and ſend a flight of devout wiſhes acroſs the dark valley, to meet the approaching joys of immortality. Amen.

A HYMN.

HAPPY the heart where graces reign,
Where love inſpires the breaſt;
Love is the brighteſt of the train,
And quickens all the reſt.

II.

Knowledge, alas! 'tis all in vain,
And all in vain our fear;
Our ſtubborn ſins will fight and reign,
If love be abſent there.

III.

'Tis love that makes our cheerful feet
In ſwift obedience move;
The devils know, and tremble too,
But Satan cannot love.

IV.

Before we quite forſake this clay,
Or leave this dark abode:
The wings of love bear us away,
To ſee our ſmiling God.

V.

This is the grace that lives and ſings,
When faith and hope ſhall ceaſe,
'Tis this ſhall ſtrike our joyful ſtrings
In the ſweet realms of bliſs.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS:

FROM

MR. HOWE.

CONTENTS.

OF the Bleſſedneſs ariſing from a Sight of God's Glory. Page 1

Of the Advantage of heavenly above earthly Knowledge. - - 10

The Bleſſedneſs of bearing the Image and Likeneſs of God. - 16

The Satisfaction ariſing from the Exerciſe of thoſe Graces which immediately relate to the bleſſed God. - 21

The Pleaſure ariſing from a Senſe of our Likeneſs to God. - 30

The Imperfection of our preſent State compared with our future Bleſſedneſs. 40

Chriſtians called upon to lament their low Attainment; and reminded of the Excellency of which their Souls are capable. 45

A Change of Heart neceſſary to our partaking of the heavenly Bleſſedneſs. 5

The Satisfaction ariſing from our preſent Conformity to God, and the Love of God, in preparing his People for this Bleſſedneſs. 6

The Unrighteous neceſſarily excluded from Bleſſedneſs. - - 7

Hope, the preſent Happineſs of the Saints. 7

Chriſtians exhorted to ſettle in their Judgments the true Notion of the heavenly Bleſſedneſs, and to compare with it the Temper of their own Minds. 8

Thoſe who ſee Reaſon to ſuſpect themſelves averſe to the heavenly Bleſſedneſs, exhorted to be earneſt in their Endeavours after a Temper of Mind ſuitable to it. 9

Chriſtians exhorted to a gradual Improve-

ment and Meetneſs for the heavenly Bleſſedneſs. - - 103

Chriſtians directed to raiſe their Deſires above the preſent State, and to preſs forward with joyful Expectation of the future Bleſſedneſs. - 114

Chriſtians reminded of their high Hopes and Expectations, and exhorted to live more like the Children of God, and Heirs of Heaven. - 126

Chriſtians exhorted to live leſs under the Influence of the preſent State, and more under the Power of the World to come; and to bear with Patience thoſe light Afflictions which ſhall work out for them an eternal Weight of Glory. 140

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

Of the Bleſſedneſs ariſing from a Sight of God's Glory.

PSALM xviii. 15.

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteouſneſs: I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy likeneſs.

WHAT a ſpring of pleaſure is here! "In thy preſence," ſaith the Pſalmiſt, "is fulneſs of joy; at thy right-hand are pleaſures for evermore."

The awaking ſoul, having now paſſed the path of life, enters the preſence-chamber of the Great King, the habitation of his holineſs and glory, the place where his honour dwelleth: here his glory ſurrounds it with encircling beams: it is beſet with glory, therefore ſurely alſo filled with joy. God is now no longer ſeen through an obſcure medium: the diſcovery of this glory is the ultimate product of that infinite wiſdom and love that have been working from eternity, through all the ſucceſſions of time, toward the heirs of ſalvation; the laſt and complete iſſue of the great atchievements, ſharp conflicts, glorious victories, and high merits of our mighty Redeemer; all theſe end in the opening of heaven, the laying of this glory, as it were, common to all believers. Will it not, think ye, be a ſatisfying glory? The full bleſſedneſs of the redeemed is the Redeemer's reward; it is the ſeaſon of his triumph, and

the ſaints are to enter into his joy: it is the appointed jubilee, at the finiſhing of all God's works from the creation of the world, when he ſhall purpoſely ſhew himſelf in his moſt adorable majeſty, and when Chriſt ſhall appear in his own likeneſs: ſurely glory muſt be in its exaltation in that day!

How grateful a ſight will the divine glory be in the following particulars!

His unſearchable wiſdom.

Glory is, as it were, by inheritance due to wiſdom; the wiſe ſhall inherit glory. Twice we have the apoſtle aſcribing glory to God under the notion of only wiſe. How pleaſant will the contemplation be of the Divine Wiſdom, when we ſhall have the lively view of all that truth, the knowledge whereof can be any way poſſible and grateful to our natures, and in his light ſee light: when all thoſe vaſt treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, which already by their

alliance to Christ saints are interested in, shall lie open to us; when the tree of knowledge shall be without inclosure, and the most voluptuous epicurism in reference to it be innocent; when the pleasure of speculation shall be without the toil, and that maxim be eternally antiquated, that increased knowledge increases sorrow; when the records of eternity shall be exposed to view; all the councils and results of that profound wisdom looked into: how will it transport when it shall be discerned, lo! thus were the designs laid, here were the apt junctures and admirable dependencies of things, which, when acted upon the stage of the world, seemed so perplexed and cross, so full of mysterious intricacy!

If St. Paul was so ravished at those more obscure appearances of divine wisdom, which we find him admiring, O the depths! what satisfaction will it yield to have a perfect model of the deep thoughts and councils of

God presented to open view! How is the happiness of Solomon's servants magnified, who had the privilege to stand continually before him, and hear his wisdom! But this happiness will be proportionably greater, as Solomon's God is greater than him. The glory of his power will add comeliness to the object of this vision: and certainly, even this glory cannot but cast a grateful aspect upon the blessed soul, and be infinitely pleasant to behold. What triumphs doth it now raise in gracious spirits to behold the exertions of it in his works! to read its descriptions in his word! while the countenance of enthroned majesty cannot be seen, and the thunder of his power so little understood! How grateful to behold whence the vast frame of nature sprang! What stretched out the heavens, established the earth, sustained all things! What turned the the mighty wheels of providence throughout all the succession of

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time! What ordered and changed times and ſeaſons, chained up devils, reſtrained the outrages of a tumultuous world, preſerved God's little flock! eſpecially what gave being to the new creation (the exceeding greatneſs of power that wrought in them that believed, &c.)! What made hearts love God and embrace a Saviour! What it was that overcame, and made them a willing people in that memorable day!

And what do we think of the raviſhing aſpects of his love, when it ſhall have laid aſide its veil, his amiable ſmiles be chequered with no intermingled frowns, the light of that pleaſing countenance be obſcured by no intervening cloud! When goodneſs, grace, and mercy, ſhall conſpire, in their diſtinct and variegated appearances, to ſet off each other, and enhance the pleaſure of the admiring ſoul! When the wonted doubts ſhall all ceaſe, and the difficulty vaniſh, of reconciling fatherly

ſeverity with love! When the full ſenſe ſhall be unfolded to the life of that deſcription of the divine nature —God is love! He hath now traced home the rivulets to their fountain, the beams to the Son of love: he hath got the proſpect at laſt into that heart where the great thoughts of love were lodged from everlaſting, where all its councils and deſigns were formed. He ſees what made God become a man, what made eternity become the birth of time, what moved the heart of the Son of God to pitch his tabernacle among men, what engaged him to the enterpriſe of redeeming ſinners, what moved him ſo earneſtly to conteſt with a periſhing world, led him at laſt to the croſs, made him content to become a ſacrifice to God, a ſpectacle to angels and men, in a bitter reproachful death, inflicted by the ſacrilegious hands of thoſe whom he was all this while deſigning to ſave: the amazed ſoul now ſees into the

bottom of this design, understands why itself was not made a prey to divine revenge, whence it was that it perished not in its enmity against God, why he so long suffered its injurious neglects of him, and unkind repulses of a merciful Saviour, and persuaded till at last he overcame: made the averse heart yield, the careless disaffected soul cry out, "Where is my God?—now a Christ, or I perish!" All this is now resolved into love; and the adoring soul sees how well the effects agree to their cause, and are owned by it: nothing but heaven can give the sense, can give the notion of this pleasure.

Nor will the glory of his holiness be less resplendent: this is the very lustre and glory of his other perfections. He is glorious in holiness; and what is of so great account with him, will not be of the least account with his holy ones, when they appear in his glorious presence; their own holiness is a conformity to his;

and as their beholding it forms them into that likeneſs, ſo that likeneſs makes them capable of beholding it with pleaſure. So far as the new man is put on, created after God, ſo they who were in darkneſs, are made light in the Lord: he is not under any notion more acceptable to them than as he is the Holy One: they love his law becauſe it is holy, and love each other becauſe they perceive holy diſpoſitions implanted in the heart, and abhor themſelves becauſe they are not more ſo. Holineſs hath ſtill a pleaſing aſpect: when they find it in an ordinance, meet it in a Sabbath, every glimpſe of it is lovely. But with what triumph hath the holineſs of God himſelf been celebrated, even by the ſaints on earth! Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holineſs! Sing unto the Lord, all ye ſaints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holineſs! What thoughts will they have of it when their eyes can be-

hold that holineſs of which their own was but the image, and can view that glorious pattern they were ſo long in framing to! How joyfully will they then fall in with the reſt of the heavenly hoſt in that triumphant ſong, Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth!

Of the Advantage of heavenly above earthly Knowledge.

INtellectual pleaſure is as much nobler than that of ſenſe, as an immortal ſpirit is more noble than that of a clod of earth; the pleaſure of ſenſe is droſſy, the pleaſure of the mind refined and pure; that is faint and languid, this lively and vigorous: that ſcant and limited, this ample and enlarged: that temporary and fading, this durable and permanent; that flaſhy and ſuperficial, this ſolid and intenſe: and as intellectual

pleaſure exceeds all pleaſure of ſenſe, ſo doth heavenly knowledge exceed that of earth. What magnificent things doth Scripture ſpeak of faith! how clear are its apprehenſions! it is the evidence of things not ſeen: how ſweet its employments! whom not ſeeing ye love, and though now you ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory: but even this is infinitely exceeded by heavenly knowledge. While the Queen of Sheba only heard of Solomon's glory, ſhe could not ſatisfy herſelf without the ſight of her own eye; and when ſhe ſaw it, ſhe ſaid the one half was not told her of what ſhe now beheld; it put her into an extacy, it raviſhed away her ſoul, ſhe had no more ſpirit, &c. What then would the ſight of the divine glory do, if God did not ſtrengthen with all might; were there not as well glorious power to ſupport, as powerful glory to tranſform? Job had heard of God by

the hearing of the ear; but when once his eye saw him, what work did it make in his soul! The devils believe and tremble; yet their present torment is nothing in comparison of what they expect. Let the wicked consider this: were their belief and terror equal to what the devils themselves have, actual sensation would more exceed their present misery than the devils do now exceed them.

There is, no doubt, a proportionable difference between the impressions of present faith and future vision with holy souls: their present joy cannot be described, their future then cannot be conceived: experience daily tells us, how greatly sensible objects have the advantage over us, beyond those that are spiritual and distant, though infinitely more excellent and important. When the tables are turned, the now sensible things disappear, a new scene of things invisible and eternal is immediately presented to our view; a kind

meſſage from an indulgent father to his far diſtant ſon, informing of his welfare and yet continuing love, will much affect, but the ſight of his father's face will even tranſport and overcome him with joy.

There is a great power now attends realizing thoughts of God; whether it appears in the working of the ſoul towards God, or by way of reflection upon itſelf: if directly towards God, how mightily is he admired! who is a God like unto thee! if by reflection upon our own ſin and viciouſneſs, how deeply doth it humble! now mine eye ſeeth thee, therefore I abhor myſelf—woe is me, I am undone!—mine eyes have ſeen the Lord of Glory. If by way of reflection upon our own intereſt in him, or relation to him, how mightily doth it ſupport and comfort! I will look to the Lord, my God will hear me. How full of rich ſenſe is that ſcripture, "they looked to him and were lightened!" one look

clothed them with light, caſt a glory upon their ſouls, filled them with life and joy! O! the power then of thoſe heavenly viſions! when we dwell on the views of that transforming glory, we ſhall then be better able to diſcern the divine excellencies together, have a fuller and more complete notion of God; we ſhall ſee him as he is. As to the wicked, how often does the very idea they have of God prove fatal to their ſouls! In general, they confine thoſe few thoughts of God which they have only to his mercy, and that excluſive of his holineſs and juſtice; hence their vain and mad preſumption, thou thoughteſt I was altogether ſuch a one as thyſelf. Sometimes when conſcience hath arreſted the ſelf-condemned wretch, God is thought of under no other notion than of an irreconcilable enemy and avenger, as one thirſty after the blood of ſouls: ſo flatly contrary to all his diſcoveries of himſelf, forged only out of the

inveterate hatred of their own hearts againſt him, becauſe they have no mind to acquaint themſelves with him, and that they may have ſome colour for their affected diſtance; and ſo perhaps never return, but periſh under an horrid wilful deſpair.

And even the people of God themſelves are too apt ſometimes ſo wholly to fix their eyes upon love and grace, that they grow into an unbecoming uncreaturely familiarity, while the thoughts of infinite majeſty, adorable greatneſs and glory are aſleep. Sometimes, poſſibly, they apprehend vindictive juſtice, the indignation and jealouſy of God againſt ſin, to that degree of terror and dread, that they grow into a childlike ſtrangeneſs towards him, and take little pleaſure in drawing nigh to him.

But then, when our eyes ſhall take in the diſcovery of divine glory equally, how ſweet and ſatisfying a pleaſure will ariſe from that grateful

mixture of reverent love, humble joy, modeſt confidence, meek courage, a proſtrate magnanimity, a triumphant veneration! a ſoul ſhrinking before the divine glory into nothing, yet not contenting itſelf with any leſs enjoyment than of him who is all in all!

The Bleſſedneſs of bearing the Image and Likeneſs of God.

THIS likeneſs or conformity to God is a perfect temperament, a ſtrong ſound conſtitution of ſoul. Let us but imagine what it is to a man's body, after a waſting ſickneſs, to find himſelf well; when all the parts and members of the body are in their proper places and proportions, and a lively active vigour, a ſprightly ſtrength, poſſeſſes every part, and actuates the whole! How pleaſant is this temper! If we were all body,

there could be no greater felicity than this: but by how much the more noble any creature is, ſo is it capable of more exquiſite pains or pleaſures. Sin is the ſickneſs and diſeaſe of the ſoul, enfeebles all its powers, exhauſts its vigour, and waſtes its ſtrength. The way of wickedneſs is called a way of pain; ſinners would find it ſo, if the violence of the diſeaſe had not bereft them of ſenſe. The image of God renewed in holineſs and righteouſneſs, is health reſtored after ſuch a conſuming ſickneſs.

"The fear of the Lord is ſaid to be, health to the navel and marrow to the bones;" that the ways of divine wiſdom are all pleaſantneſs and peace;" and that "in keeping his commandments there is great reward." And what are his commandments but thoſe expreſſions of himſelf wherein we are to be like him, and conform to his will. The kingdom of God is righteouſneſs, and then peace. Let ſuch as know any

thing of this bleſſed temper and complexion of ſoul, compare this Scripture and their own experience together. When at any time they find their ſouls under the bleſſed empire and dominion of a ſpiritual mind; when ſpirituality wholly rules and denominates them, are not their ſouls the very region of life and peace; not raging life, not ſtupid peace; but a placid peaceful life; a vital, vigorous reſt and peace. Now can the ſoul ſay, I feel myſelf well; all is now well with me. Holy ſouls were once darkneſs, but they are now light in the Lord: He the Father of lights, they the children of light; though we cannot ſay that holy ſouls are now, according to the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, Light; but thus it will be when they awake: they ſhall then be like God fully and throughout. O the joy and pleaſure of a ſoul made after ſuch a ſimilitude! How infinitely ſatisfying and delightful will it be when the ſoul ſhall find itſelf

naturalized to every thing in its duty, and ſhall have no other duty incumbent on it than to be happy! When it ſhall need no arguments and exhortations to love God, nor need be urged and preſt as heretofore to mind him, to fear before him; when love, reverence, adoration, and praiſe, when delight and joy, ſhall be all natural acts, can you ſeparate this in your thoughts from the higheſt ſatisfaction? There will be there no law in the members warring againſt the law of the mind; that war is now ended in a glorious victory and peace: there will be no remaining blindneſs of mind, nor error of judgment, nor perverſeneſs of will, nor irregularity or rebellion of affection: no ignorance of God or diſaffection towards him.

God hath now put the laſt hand to this glorious image, added to it its utmoſt accompliſhment; now a conformity to Chriſt, even in the reſurrection from the dead in his glorious

ſtate, is fully attained:—that prize of the high calling of God is now won; and the humble ſenſe of not having attained as yet, and of not being already perfect, is turned into joyful acclamations. Grace! grace! for the laying on of the top-ſtone, the finiſhing of this glorious work!

Now the new creature hath arrived to the meaſure of the ſtature of a perfect man in Chriſt Jeſus. The firſt formation of this ſpiritual man was hidden and ſecret; its growth is alſo by very inſenſible degrees, as it is with the products of nature; but its arrival to perfection is infinitely more ſtrange than any thing in nature ever was: how ſudden and wonderful is the change, when, in the twinkling of an eye, the bleſſed ſoul inſtantly awakes out of drowſy languiſhings, and miſerable weakneſs, into perfect ſtrength and vigour! O! what will the pleaſure be that ſhall accompany this ſtate of perfection!

The Satisfaction ariſing from the Exerciſe of thoſe Graces which immediately relate to the bleſſed God.

DEPENDENCE gives God his proper glory; it is the peculiar honour and prerogative of Deity to have a world of creatures hanging upon it: the magnifying and exalting of God is the moſt natural thing to a holy ſoul; the moſt fundamental law of the new creature ſelf gives place, that God may take it; becomes nothing, that he may be all; it vaniſhes, that his glory may ſhine the brighter. How unſpeakably pleaſant to the glorified ſoul will the exerciſe of this grace be in heaven; when the perpetuation of its being ſhall be nothing elſe than a perpetuation of this acknowledgment, when every renewed aſpiration, every motion, every pulſe of the ſoul ſhall be but a repetition of

it; how pleaſant, as it were, to loſe itſelf in Him, and to be ſwallowed up in the overcoming ſenſe of his boundleſs all-ſufficient everywhere flowing fulneſs! how well does it ſuit the ſtate of a creature, and the ſpirit of a ſaint, to yield an entire ſubjection, and unreſerved dedication of itſelf to the Supreme Majeſty, to become a conſecrated devoted thing, ſacred to God, its very life and whole being made over to him! with what delightful reliſh and ſweet pleaſure is this done, when the words are no ſooner ſpoken, "worthy art thou, O Lord! to receive glory, honour, and power, for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are and were created;" but they are reſounded from the inmoſt bowels, the moſt ſecret chambers of the ſoul, O Lord! thou art worthy: worthy, that I, and all things ſhould be to thee; worthy to be the Omega, as thou art the Alpha; the Laſt, as thou art the Firſt; the End, as thou art the Be-

ginning of all things; the Ocean into which all being ſhall flow, as the Fountain from which it ſprang; my whole ſelf, and all my powers, the excellencies now implanted in my being, the privileges of my now glorified ſtate, are all worth nothing to me but for thee, and pleaſe me only as they make me fitter for thee. O the pleaſure of theſe ſentiments, the joy of ſuch raptures! when the ſoul ſhall have no other notion of itſelf than of an everlaſting ſacrifice, always aſcending to God in its own flames.

This devotedneſs and ſubjection ſpeak not barely an act, but a ſtate, a being to the praiſe of grace; a living to God: and it is no mean pleaſure that the ſincere ſoul finds in the imperfect beginnings, the firſt eſſays of this life, the initial breathings of ſuch a ſpirit, its entrance into this bleſſed ſtate; when it makes the firſt tender and preſent of itſelf to God; when it firſt begins to eſteem itſelf

an hallowed thing, ſeparate and ſet apart for God, its firſt act of unfeigned ſelf-reſignation; when it tells God from the very heart, I now give myſelf up to Thee to be thine. Never was a marriage covenant made with ſuch pleaſure, with ſuch complacential conſent.

This quitting claim to ourſelves, parting with ourſelves upon ſuch terms, to be the Lord's for ever: O! the peace, the reſt, the acquieſcence of ſpirit that attends it! When the poor ſoul that was weary of itſelf, knew not what to do with itſelf, hath now found this way of diſpoſing of itſelf to ſuch an advantage; even the previous breathings and relentings of the ſoul towards God are pleaſant: but, O! the pleaſure of conſent! of yielding ourſelves to God! when the ſoul is overcome, and cries out, "Lord, now I reſign, I yield; poſſeſs now thy own right, I give up myſelf to thee:" that yielding is ſubjection, ſelf-de-

voting, in order to future ſervice and obedience; and never did any man enroll himſelf as a ſervant to the greateſt prince upon earth with ſuch joy. What pleaſure is there in the frequent recognition of theſe tranſactions! in multiplying ſuch bonds upon a man's ſoul, though done faintly, while the fear of breaking them checks its joy! When in the uttering theſe words, "I am thy ſervant, O Lord! thy ſervant, the ſon of thine handmaid, thy ſervant, devoted to thy fear," a man finds they fit his ſpirit, and are aptly expreſſive of the true ſenſe of his ſoul, is it not a grateful thing? and how pleaſant is a ſtate of life agreeable to ſuch tranſactions with God! when it is meat and drink to do his will! when his zeal eats a man up; and the vigour of his ſoul exhaled in his ſervice! is it not a pleaſant thing ſo to ſpend and be ſpent? A ſoul caſt into ſuch a mould, formed into ſuch

a frame, what ſweet peace doth it enjoy!

The creature is not in its place but when it is thus ſubject, is in this ſubordination to God. The ſoul that is but in a degree reduced to that bleſſed temper, is, as it were, in a new world, ſo great a change doth it now feel in itſelf: but when this transformation ſhall be completed in it, and the will of God no ſooner known than reſted in, with a complacential approbation, and every motion of the firſt and great Mover ſhall be an efficacious law to guide and determine all our motions; and the leſſer wheels ſhall preſently run, at the firſt impulſe of the great and maſter wheel, without the leaſt rub or heſitation; when the law of ſin ſhall no longer check the law of God; when all the contentions of rebellious fleſh, all the counter ſtrivings of a perverſe ungovernable heart ſhall ceaſe for ever, —O inconceivable bleſſedneſs of

this conſent! the pleaſure of this joyful harmony, this peaceful accord!

How delightful alſo will be the exerciſe of love; this is an eminent part of the image or likeneſs of God in his ſaints; as it is that great attribute of the Divine Being that is alone put to give us a notion of God. God is love: this is an excellency made up of pleaſantneſs: love to a friend is not without high pleaſure, eſpecially when he is actually preſent and enjoyed; love to a ſaint riſes higher in nobleneſs and pleaſure, according to the more excellent qualification of its object.

It is now in its higheſt improvement in both theſe reſpects, where whatever tends to gratify our nature, whether as humane or holy, will be in its full perfection; it ſhall no longer be its complaint and burden that it cannot retaliate in this kind; that being loved it cannot love.

In that bleſſed ſtate there will be liberty indeed, the glorious liberty

of the children of God; the liberty with which the Son makes free. The neareſt approaches of the ſoul to God, its intimate union with him, and intire ſubjection to him, in its glorified ſtate, makes its liberty conſummate. Now is its liberty complete, its bands are fallen off; it is perfectly diſentangled from all the ſnares of death in which it was formerly held. With what delight doth the poor priſoner entertain himſelf when his manacles and fetters are knocked off! when he is enlarged from his loathſome dungeon and the houſe of his bondage; can diſpoſe of himſelf, and walk at liberty whither he will! The bird eſcaped from his cage, how pleaſantly doth it range! with what joy doth it clap its wings, and take its flight!—a faint emblem of the joy wherewith that cheerful note ſhall one day be ſung and chanted forth, "Our ſoul is eſcaped as a bird out of the ſnare of a fowler; the ſnare is broken, and we are eſcaped." There

is now no room for such a complaint, "I would but I cannot." The blessed soul feels itself free from all confinement; nothing resists its will, as its will doth never resist the will of God.

Tranquillity is also an eminent part of that assimilation to God, wherein the blessedness of heaven consists; a perfect composure, a perpetual and everlasting calm. Holy souls begin herein to imitate God as soon as they first give themselves up to his wise and gracious conduct. It is enough that he is wise for himself and them: their hearts safely trust in him: they commit themselves with unsolicitous confidence to his guidance, knowing that he cannot be misled, and that he will not mislead them. They before owed their tranquillity to their faith, now to their fruition. Those words have now their fullest sense—"Return to thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee!"

The Pleaſure ariſing from a Senſe of our Likeneſs to God.

HOW pleaſing a ſpectacle will it be to the glorified ſoul to behold intentively its own glorious frame! When it ſhall dwell in the contemplation of itſelf! view itſelf round on every part, turn its eye from glory to glory, from beauty to beauty, and trace over the whole draught of this image, this ſo exquiſite piece of divine workmanſhip, drawn out in full perfection upon itſelf!

From the ſoul's firſt converſion till now, God hath been, as it were, at work upon it; hath been labouring it, ſhaping it, poliſhing it, ſpreading his own glory upon it, enlarging it, enamelling it with glory: now, at laſt, the whole work is revealed, the curtain is drawn aſide, the bleſſed ſoul awakes. Come now, ſaith God,

behold my work, ſee what I have done upon thee, let my work now ſee the light; it was a work carried on in a myſtery, ſecretly wrought by a ſpirit that came and went no man can tell how.

Beſides that in the general only we knew that we ſhould be like him, it did not yet appear what we ſhould be; now it appears: there is revelation of this glory. O the raviſhing pleaſure of its firſt appearance! The bleſſed ſoul will alſo receive the higheſt ſatisfaction from comparing its preſent glory with its former ſtate; when it ſhall conſider at once what it is, and what once it was, and thus bethink itſelf: I that did ſometime bear the accurſed image of the prince of darkneſs, do now repreſent and partake of the holy pure nature of the Father of Lights. I was a mere chaos, an hideous heap of deformity, confuſion, and darkneſs; but He that made light to ſhine out of darkneſs ſhined into me, to give the light

of his own glory in the face of Jesus Christ," and since made my way as the shining light, shining brighter unto this perfect day.

I was an habitation for dragons, a cage of noisome lusts; then was I hateful to God, and an hater of him; sin and vanity had all my heart; the charming invitations and allurements of grace were as music to a dead man; to think a serious thought of God, or breathe forth an affectionate desire after him, was as much against my heart as to pluck out mine eyes, or offer violence to my own life.

After I began to live the spiritual new life, how slow and faint was my progress and tendency toward perfection! how indisposed did I find myself to the proper actions of that life! To go about any holy spiritual work, was too often, as to climb a hill, or strive against the stream; or as an attempt to fly without wings.

I have sometimes said to my heart, Come, now, let me pray, love God,

think of heaven; but, O! how lifteſs to theſe things! how lifeleſs in them! impreſſions made how quickly loſt! gracious frames, how ſoon wrought off and gone! characters of glory razed out and overſpread with earth and dirt! divine comelineſs hath now at length made me perfect! He hath put another nature into me, the true likeneſs of his own holy divine nature; he hath now perfectly maſtered and wrought out the enmity of my heart againſt him. Now to be with God is my very element; loving, admiring, praiſing him, are as natural as breathing once was. I am all ſpirit and life; I feel myſelf diſburdened of all the heavy oppreſſive weights that once hung upon me; no body of death doth now encumber me, no deadneſs of heart, no coldneſs of love, no drowſy ſloth, no averſeneſs from God, no earthly mind, no ſenſual inclinations, no ſinful diviſions of heart between God and creatures; he hath now the

whole of me. I enjoy and delight in none but him: O bleſſed change! O happy day!

What tranſports will it occaſion when glorified ſpirits ſhall make ſuch a reflection as this:—Lo! here we ſhine in the glorious brightneſs of the divine image; and behold yonder deformed accurſed ſouls, they were as capable of this glory as we; had the ſame nature with us, the ſame reaſon, the ſame intellectual faculties and powers; but what monſters are they now become!—they eternally hate the eternal excellency; ſin and death are finiſhed upon them; they have each of them an hell of horror and wickedneſs in themſelves. Whence is this amazing difference? though this cannot but be an awful wonder—it cannot alſo but be tempered with pleaſure and joy.

O! what heart can compaſs the greatneſs of this thought!—to be made like God! Lord, will the bleſſed ſoul ſay, was there no lower

pattern than thyſelf, thy glorious bleſſed ſelf, according to which to form a worm? And when it reflects on the method and courſe by which it has been accompliſhed, views over the work of redemption, in its tendency to this end, the reſtoring God's image in ſouls; conſiders Chriſt manifeſted to us, in order to his being revealed and formed in us; that God was made in the likeneſs of man, to make men after the likeneſs of God; that he partook with us of the human nature, that we might partake with him of the divine; that he aſſumed our fleſh, in order to impart to us his ſpirit: when it ſhall be conſidered, for this end had we ſo many great and precious promiſes; for this end did the glory of God ſhine upon us, through the glaſs of the Goſpel, that we might be partakers of the divine nature; yea, when it ſhall be called to mind that our Lord Jeſus lived for this end, that we might learn ſo to walk as he

alſo walked; that he died that we might be conformed to his death, and that he roſe again that we might with him attain the reſurrection of the dead; that he was in us the hope of glory, that he might be in us our final conſummate glory itſelf alſo, with what joy and pleaſure ſhall we contemplate truths ſo harmonious! ſo divine!

Now may the glorified ſaint ſay, I here ſee the end the Lord Jeſus came into this world for; I ſee for what he was lifted up, and made a ſpectacle—that he might be a transforming one:—what the effuſions of his Spirit were for; why it ſo earneſtly ſtrove with my heart; I now behold, in my own ſoul, the fruit of the travail of his ſoul.

This was the project of redeeming love, the deſign of all-powerful grace: glorious atchievement! bleſſed end of that great and notable undertaking! happy iſſue of that high deſign!

When it ſhall be conſidered by a ſaint in glory, that the attainment of this perfect likeneſs to God was the utmoſt mark of all my deſigns and aims, my hopes and deſires; this is what I longed and laboured, prayed and waited for; which I ſo earneſtly breathed after, and reſtleſsly purſued—it was but to recover the defaced image of God; to be again made like him, as once I was.

Now I have attained my end; I have the fruit of all my labour; I now ſee the truth of thoſe encouraging words, "Bleſſed are they that "hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled." "Be not weary of well doing, for "ye ſhall reap if ye faint not."

What would I once have given for a ſteady abiding frame of holineſs; for a heart conſtantly bent and biaſſed towards God; conſtantly ſerious, conſtantly tender, lively, watchful, heavenly, ſpiritual, meek, humble, cheerful, ſelf-denying! how

have I cried and ſtriven for this—to get ſuch a heart! ſuch a temper! how have I pleaded with God for it? how often have I ſpread this deſire before the Searcher and Judge of hearts! Turn me out of all my worldly comforts, ſo thou give me but ſuch a heart; let me ſpend my days in priſon, or a deſart; I refuſe no reproaches, no loſſes, may I but have ſuch a heart!

What indignation have I ſometimes conceived againſt my own ſoul, when I have found it wandering, and could not reduce it; hovering, and could not fix it; dead, and could not quicken it!

How earneſtly have I expected this bleſſed day, when all thoſe diſtempers ſhould be perfectly healed, and my ſoul recover an healthy, lively, ſpiritual frame! how great then will be the joy when all former deſires, hopes, and endeavours, are crowned with ſucceſs! this joy is the joy of harveſt; they that have

ſown in tears do now reap in joy; they that went out weeping, bearing precious ſeed, now, with rejoicing, bring their ſheaves with them.

The holy ſoul ſhall enjoy an everlaſting friendſhip with God; it ſhall never ſin more! and what ſolace ſhall the bleſſed ſoul find in this! If now an angel from heaven ſhould aſſume it, that from ſuch an hour it ſhould ſin no more, the world would not be big enough to hold it; it hath now eſcaped the greateſt of dangers, the worſt of deaths; the ſting of death, the hell of hell! The deliverance is now complete, which cannot but end in delight and praiſe.

Another ſource of joy to the holy ſoul will be, that his God will never frown more; how pleaſant a thought is this, I ſhall always behold his ſerene countenance, his amiable face, never covered with a cloud, never darkened with a frown! I ſhall now have cauſe to complain no more, my God is a ſtranger to me, he conceals

himſelf, I cannot ſee his face; lo! he is encompaſſed with clouds and darkneſs, or with flames and horrors.

I ſhall have free admiſſion into the divine preſence, and pour forth myſelf in effuſions of love and joy for ever.

The Imperfection of our preſent State compared with our future Bleſſedneſs.

THE experience of ſaints in their beſt ſtate on earth, their deſires, their hopes, their ſighs and groans, do ſufficiently witneſs they are not yet ſatisfied; the completion of this bleſſedneſs is reſerved to a better ſtate; it is the end of their way, the reſt from their labours, the reward of their work.

The condition of the ſoul in this life, even at beſt, is but a ſleep; when it paſſes out of it into the in-

viſible regions, it is truly ſaid to awake.

Its abode in this mortal body is but a continual ſleep, its ſenſes are bound up, a drowſy ſlumber poſſeſſes and ſuſpends all its faculties and powers; before the renovating change, how frequently doth the Scripture ſpeak of ſinners as men aſleep! "Let us not ſleep as do "others! awake thou that ſleepeſt, "and ſtand up from the dead." They are in a dead ſleep, under the ſleep of death; they apprehend things as men aſleep: what ſlight, obſcure, hovering notions have they of the moſt momentous things; and which it moſt concerns them to have thorough, real apprehenſions of! all their thoughts of God, Chriſt, heaven, hell, of ſin, of holineſs, are but uncertain wild gueſſes, the abſurdity of which they no more reflect upon than men aſleep; they know not theſe things, but only dream of them; they put darkneſs for light, and light

for darkneſs; they have no ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern between good and evil; the moſt ſubſtantial realities are with them mere ſhadows; fancied and imagined dangers ſtartle them; real ones, though ever ſo near them, they as little fear; the lion in the way, which they dream of in their ſlothful ſlumbers, affrights them; but the real roaring lion, that is ready to devour them, they are not afraid of: even converſion doth not totally break off this ſleep!

What a difficulty is it to watch but one hour! there are ſome lucid and vivid intervals, but of how ſhort continuance! how ſoon doth the awakened ſoul cloſe its heavy eyes, and fall aſleep again! how often do temptations ſurprize even ſuch, while no ſenſe of danger can prevail upon them to watch and pray! to this drowſy inadvertency is moſt of our ſins to be imputed; we keep not our ſpirits in a watchful poſture; our eyes, that ſhould be ever towards

the Lord, will not be kept open, and though we reſolve, we forget ourſelves; before we are aware, we find ourſelves overtaken: ſleep comes upon us like an armed man, and we cannot avert it. How often do we hear, and read, and pray, and meditate, as perſons aſleep! as if we knew not what we were about! amidſt our ſecure ſlumbers how many remarkable providences eſcape our notice or due improvement! how many viſits from heaven are loſt to us, when we are between ſleeping and waking! we own not the voice that calls upon us till our beloved hath withdrawn himſelf! we forget our own country and our relation to the Father of ſpirits!

Happy ſouls! who are ſo far awake as to prefer the realities of eternity to the ſhadows of time! When the holy ſoul is diſmiſſed from this earthly body, it will ſhake off this drowſy ſleep; now is the happy ſeaſon of its awaking into the

heavenly vital light of God! the bleſſed morning of that long deſired day, is now dawned upon it; the cumberſome night-veil is laid aſide, and the garments of ſalvation and immortal glory are now put on!

And how pleaſant will it be to contemplate and admire the wiſdom and power of the Great Creator in this glorious change! when I ſhall find a clod of earth, an heap of duſt, refined into celeſtial purity and brightneſs; when what was ſown in corruption ſhall be raiſed in incorruption; what was ſown in diſhonour is raiſed in glory; what was ſown a natural body is raiſed a ſpiritual body; when this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality, and death be ſwallowed up in victory!

Chriſtians called upon to lament their low Attainment; and reminded of the Excellency of which their ſouls are capable.

LET us ſtop here and aſk ourſelves, what uſe we have made of theſe heavenly meditations?

Do we wiſh to have a better ſpirit, a more refined heavenly temper of ſoul, a meekneſs for this heavenly bleſſedneſs?

How ſad is it that we ſhould be ſo little affected by theſe hopes and proſpects. How unlike is the Chriſtian world to the Chriſtian doctrine! The ſeal is fair and excellent, but the impreſſion is languid, or not viſible.

Where is that ſerious godlineſs, that heavenlineſs, that purity, that ſpirituality, that righteouſneſs, that peace, into which the Chriſtian re-

ligion is moſt aptly deſigned to work and form the ſpirits of men? We think to be ſaved by an empty name, and glory in the ſhow and appearance of that, the life and power of which we hate and deride.

It is a reproach with us not to be called a Chriſtian, and a greater reproach to be one: not to be profeſſedly religious is barbarous; to be ſo in good earneſt, ridiculous. In other things men act according to the rules of their callings and profeſſion, and he would be reckoned a fool that would not do ſo. In religion only it is accounted abſurd to be and do according to its known and agreed principles; and he is eſteemed a fool that ſhall but practiſe as all about him profeſs to believe.

Whence is this inconſiſtency between the profeſſion and practice of religion? What hath thus ſtupified and unmanned the world, that ſeriouſneſs in religion ſhould be thought the character of a fool? that men

muſt viſibly make a mockery of the moſt fundamental articles of faith only to ſave their reputation, and be afraid to be ſerious leſt they ſhould be thought mad! It is thought enough to have theſe doctrines in our creed, though never in our hearts: and ſuch as will not deride the holineſs it ſhould produce, yet endeavour not to urge theſe truths upon their own ſouls; what ſhould turn all into grace and ſpirit turns into notion and talk; and men think all is well, if their heads be filled, and their tongues tipt, with what ſhould transform their ſouls and govern their lives.

How are the moſt awful truths that ſhould have the greateſt power upon men's ſpirits trifled with, as matters only of ſpeculation and diſcourſe! were theſe heavenly doctrines believed in earneſt, were our minds transfigured by them, what manner of perſons ſhould we be in all holy converſation and godlineſs?

True bleſſedneſs conſiſts not in any ſenſual enjoyment. The experience of almoſt ſix thouſand years hath teſtified the incompetency of every worldly thing to make men happy—that the preſent pleaſing of our ſenſes, and the gratification of our animal part, is not bleſſedneſs; but every age, notwithſtanding, renews the enquiry after an earthly felicity; after ſo many fruſtrated attempts, ſo much time, and ſtrength, and labour loſt, men are ſtill as eagerly and vainly buſy as ever, are perpetually toſſed by unſatisfied deſires, labouring in the fire, wearying themſelves for every vanity, diſtracted by the uncertain motions of a blind mind that would be happy, and knows not how.

With what compaſſionate tears ſhould the ſtate of mankind be lamented by all that underſtand the worth of a ſoul!

They walk but in a vain ſhow, diſquieting themſelves in vain; their

ays flee away as a ſhadow, their ſtrength is only labour and ſorrow; while they riſe up early and lie down late, to ſeek reſt in trouble, and life in death. They run away from bleſſedneſs while they pretend to purſue it, and ſuffer themſelves to be led down without regret to perdition, as an ox to the ſlaughter, or a fool to the correction of the ſtocks, till a dart ſtrikes through his liver: they deſcend patiently to the chambers of death, not ſo much as once thinking whither they are going; and dream of nothing but an earthly paradiſe, till they find themſelves amidſt the infernal regions.

The ſoul of man is indeed an excellent being, capable of bleſſedneſs. It is capable not only of ſurveying the creation of God, paſſing through the ſeveral orders of created being, but of aſcending to the Being of beings; of contemplating the divine excellencies; of beholding the bright and glorious face

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of the bleſſed God himſelf, till it ha looked itſelf into his very likeneſs and has his intire image inwrough into it. Try how far thou can underſtand and trace the way that leads to this bleſſedneſs: retire a little into thyſelf; forget awhile thy relation to this ſenſible world; ſummon in thyſelf reflecting and conſidering powers; thou wilt preſently perceive thou art not already happy, thou art in ſome meaſure unſatisfied; and, as thou art not happy, it muſt be ſomething that hath a perfection in it which thou findeſt wanting in thyſelf that muſt make thee ſo; and this perfection is to be found in God alone. Upon this eternal and infinitely bleſſed God thou dependeſt; and oweſt, therefore, conſtant ſubjection and obedience to him. Thou haſt indeed offended him, and art thereby cut off from all intereſt in him, and intercourſe with him; but he hath proclaimed in his goſpel his willingneſs to be reconciled, and

that through the ſufferings, righteouſneſs, and interceſſion of his only begotten Son, thy merciful Redeemer, the way is open for thy reſtitution and recovery, that thou mayeſt partake from him whatever perfection is wanting to thy bleſſedneſs.

Nothing is required of thee but relying on and ſubmitting to thy Redeemer's gracious conduct; then turn thy mind and heart towards thy God, to know him and conform to him, to view and imitate the divine perfections; thus ſhall thy work partake of its reward, and thy duty of thy bleſſedneſs.

What violence is there done to reaſonable nature in all this, or what can hinder thee but a moſt culpable, averſe, and wicked heart? Did thy reaſon ever turn off thy ſoul from God, was it not thy corruption only? How full is thy mind and heart of vanity! how empty of God! This is the language thou ſhalt hear

from the mouth of thy Judge: "Thou didſt not like to retain me in thy knowledge or love; thou hadſt reaſon and will to uſe about meaner objects, but none for me; thou couldeſt ſometimes have ſpared me a glance, a caſt of thine eye at leaſt, when thou didſt rather chuſe it ſhould be in the ends of the earth; a thought of me had coſt thee as little, might as ſoon have been thought of as this or that vanity; but thy heart was not with me. I baniſh thee, therefore, that preſence which thou never lovedſt; I deny thee the viſion which thou didſt always ſhun, and the impreſſion of my likeneſs, which thou didſt ever hate; I eternally abandon thee to the darkneſs and deformities which were ever grateful to thee. Thine is a ſelf-created hell: the fruit of thy own choice; no invitations or perſuaſions of mind could keep thee from it. How wilt thou excuſe thy fault, or avert thy doom? what arguments ſhall defend thy

cauſe againſt theſe pleadings? nay, what armour ſhall defend thy ſoul againſt its own wounding ſelf-reflections, when every thought ſhall be a dart; and a convicted conſcience, an ever-gnawing worm, a fiery ſerpent winding about thy heart? It will now be a ſad reflection how often thou ſaweſt thy way and declined it, knew thy duty and did wave it, underſtood thy intereſt and did ſlight it, approved the things that were more excellent and did reject them: eagerly purſued empty ſhadows, while things moſt worthy of thy thoughts and purſuits were overlooked, and empty ſhadows eagerly purſued. Thy own heart will now feelingly tell thee, it was not a want of capacity, but inclination, that cut thee off from bleſſedneſs; thou wilt now bethink thyſelf, that when life and immortality were brought to light before thy eyes in the goſpel, and thou waſt told of this future bleſſedneſs of the ſaints, and preſſed

to follow holineſs, as without which thou couldeſt not ſee God, it was a reaſonable man that was ſpoken to, that had a power to underſtand, and judge, and chuſe; not a ſtone or a brute. Thy capacity of this bleſſedneſs makes thee capable alſo of the moſt exquiſite torments; how paſſionately wilt thou then cry out, Oh, that I had filled up the place of any the meaneſt creature throughout the whole creation of God; that I had been a gnat, or a fly, or had never been, rather than to have ſuch noble abuſed powers eternally to reckon for! yea, and thou muſt reckon for not only the actual light, and good impreſſions thou hadſt, but even all thou waſt capable of, and might have attained. Thou ſhalt now recount with anguiſh and horror, and rend thy ſoul with the thoughts of what thou mighteſt have been; how excellent and glorious a creature, hadſt thou not conſpired with the devil againſt thyſelf, how to deform and

deſtroy thy own ſoul! While this remembrance ſhall always afreſh return, that nothing was enjoined thee as a duty, or propoſed as thy bleſſedneſs, but what thou waſt made capable of; and, that it was not fatal neceſſity, but a wilful choice made thee miſerable.

A Change of Heart neceſſary to our partaking of the Heavenly Bleſſedneſs.

DOES the bleſſedneſs of heaven conſiſt in ſeeing God, and being ſatisfied with his likeneſs?

Then how mighty a change muſt paſs upon the ſouls of men, in order to their enjoyment of it! Their underſtandings are dark; their minds vain; their wills obſtinate; their conſciences ſeared; their hearts hard and dead; their lives one continued rebellion againſt God, and a defi-

ance to heaven—at how vaſt a diſtance are ſuch ſouls from bleſſedneſs! The nature of bleſſedneſs muſt ſure be changed, or the temper of their ſpirits; either they muſt have new hearts created, or a new heaven, if ever they be happy.

Oh the powerful infatuation of ſelf-love! that men in the gall of bitterneſs ſhould think it is well with their ſouls, and fancy themſelves meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light; and, inſtead of endeavouring to be like God, they imagine him ſuch a one as themſelves! thus their precious time for working out their ſalvation ſpends apace, while they do not ſo much as underſtand their buſineſs; their meaſured hour is almoſt out, an immenſe eternity is coming upon them, while they reſt upon their arms as men that have nothing to do.

Urge them to endeavour after a change of heart, and to be ſerious and earneſt in the buſineſs of rege-

neration, of becoming new creatures; they ſeem to underſtand it as little as if they were ſpoken to in an unknown tongue! they wonder what we would have them do; they believe all the articles of the Chriſtian creed; they are no ſtrangers to the houſe of God, but diligently attend the ſolemnities of public worſhip; ſome poſſibly can ſay, they are ſober, juſt, charitable, peaceable; and others, that can boaſt leſs of their virtues, yet ſay, they are ſorry for their ſins, and pray God to forgive them; and if we urge them concerning their becoming new creatures, ſome will reply, they have been baptized, and therein regenerate, and what would we have more!

But to how little purpoſe is it to equivocate with God, or endeavour to eſcape the notice of his eye, and pervert the true meaning of his laws! Dareſt thou venture thy ſoul upon it, that this is all God means by having a new heart created, a right

ſpirit renewed in us! by being made God's workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works; by becoming new creatures; old things being done away, all things made new; by ſo learning the truth as it is in Jeſus to the putting off the old man and putting on the new, which, after God, is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs!

When my eternal bleſſedneſs is depending, ought I not to be careful to underſtand the true meaning of theſe Scriptures, and reſt not in any thing ſhort of what they make indiſpenſably neceſſary to my entering the kingdom of God?

Sad indeed, that men ſhould be ſo bold as to give the lie to all divine revelation; and, though they are ſo plainly told, without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God! they will yet maintain their falſe hope, till, "Go, ye curſed," vindicates the truth of God, and the flames of hell be their eternal confutation.

Lord! that ſo plain a truth cannot enter into the hearts of men, that their ſouls muſt be renewed or periſh, that they will ſtill go dreaming on, that they may yet get to heaven with unſanctified hearts! How deplorable is the caſe when men have no other hope left them, but that the God of truth will prove falſe, and overturn the nature of things to ſave them in their ſins! What hath led thee into ſuch a miſchievous deluſion? how could ſuch an imagination enter into thy ſoul, that a child of wrath ſhould become a child of God, without receiving a new nature? that ſo vaſt a change ſhould be made in thy ſtate, without any at all in the temper of thy mind. The ſum of the goſpel is, that God is in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf; and this change is the reconciliation of the ſoul to God through Chriſt, a friendly and well-affected diſpoſition of ſoul towards God, our laſt end and higheſt good; and towards Chriſt,

our only way; the gospel is written to draw thee into fellowship with the Father and the Son, that thy joy may be full; the seal by which God makes the first impression of his image upon thee.

Through the exceeding great and precious promises, he makes thee partaker of the divine nature! turn thy thoughts hither then, and consider what there is done upon thy soul by the gospel to conform it to God! What pleasure dost thou take in retiring thyself with God? what care to redeem time for converse with him? hadst thou not rather be any where else? do not thy thoughts naturally fall upon any thing rather than God? he, upon whom this change had passed, could say, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches; my meditations of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord: the desire of

my ſoul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee!" This is the diſpoſition of the renewed ſoul.

How ſad is it that the ſoul ſhould be reluctant to this divine change! that the higheſt excellency, the moſt perfect beauty, lovelineſs, and love itſelf, ſhould ſo little attract a reaſonable ſpiritual being—his own offſpring ſo unkind!

To how many thouſand objects can the mind of man turn itſelf! can run with eaſe through the whole univerſe of beings! but endeavour only to draw it towards God and it recoils, thoughts and affections revolt, and decline all converſe with that bleſſed object! it is alive to ſin, to the world, to vanity; but crucified, mortified, dead to God and Jeſus Chriſt!

One would have thought no affection ſhould have been ſo natural, ſo deeply inwrought into the ſpirit of man, as an affection towards the Father of ſpirits; but here he moſt of

all discovers himself to be without natural affection.

The whole duty of man, as to the principle of it, is resolved into love; this is the fulfilling of the law; upon love to God and love to our neighbour hang all the law and the prophets; the wickedness of the world hath killed this love at the very root; it hath not only rendered man unmeet for holy communion with God, but in a great measure for civil society with one another; it hath destroyed good nature, made men false, envious, barbarous, and turned the world into habitations of cruelty; but who does not see that the enmity and disaffection of the heart towards God is the more deeply rooted, and less superable evil! The loving of God is a matter of greater difficulty, and from which the spirit of man is more remote than that of loving his neighbour. God's remoteness from our sense is indeed a cause, but no excuse; for we are not all flesh:

what have we done with our ſouls? If we cannot ſee God with our eyes, why do we not ſee him with our minds; at leaſt ſo much of him as to diſcern his excellencies above all things elſe. A reſpect to God ſpecifies every virtue and duty. By this we know we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments.

Men are eaſy of acceſs to each other; they ſlide inſenſibly into each other's boſoms; even the rougheſt natures are wrought upon by repeated kindneſs; as often falling drops at length wear and work into very ſtones! Towards God their hearts are more impenetrable than rocks, harder than adamant! He is ſeeking with ſome an acquaintance all their days; they live their whole lives under the goſpel, and yet are never won; they hearken to one another, but are utterly unperſuadable towards God, as "the deaf adder, that hears not the voice of the charmer, though

charming ever ſo wiſely! The cleareſt reaſon, the moſt powerful arguments, the ſweeteſt breathings of love move them not! "How often would I have gathered thee as the hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" God draws with the cords of a man the bands of love, but they ſtill perverſely keep at an unkind diſtance; though they have lived upon his bounty all their days, yet they ſay to God, Depart from us! Here is the principal wound and diſtemper with which ſin hath infected the heart of man; here the breach is greater, and here is the greateſt need of repair.

Let us ſeriouſly conſider, That there may be ſome gradual tendencies or fainter eſſays towards godlineſs, that fall ſhort of real godlineſs, or come not up to that thorough change and determination of heart towards God that is neceſſary to bleſſedneſs.

Many may be almoſt perſuaded,

and even within reach of heaven, may be not far from the kingdom of God, may ſeek to enter and not be able, their hearts being ſomething inclinable, but more averſe. Sometimes they are affected by the public miniſtry of the word, ſometimes by a private admonition; ſometimes God makes an affliction his miniſter; a danger ſtartles them, a ſickneſs ſhakes them, and they think to change their courſe; but how ſoon do they change their thoughts, and are where they were! What awakenings and terror, what remorſe and purpoſes do ſome men find in their own hearts, that are yet blaſted and come to nothing! how many wretched ſouls lie ſtruggling a long time under the contrary alternate impreſſions of the goſpel on the one hand, and the preſent evil world on the other; in ſome degree eſcape the corruptions of the world, by the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, but are again entangled and over-

come, ſo that their latter end is worſe than their beginning. Such a man is ſo far from being benefited by his former faint inclinations towards God, that he will be found at laſt under this aggravated wickedneſs beyond other men; that when others wandered from God through inadvertency and inconſideration, this man will be found to have been his enemy upon deliberation, and againſt the various ſtrivings of his convinced heart to the contrary. Such a one takes great pains to periſh; alas! it is not ſome tranſient ſentiments of piety, a few good thoughts or wiſhes, that beſpeak a man a new creature. It is a thorough prevailing change, that quite alters the habitual poſture of a man's ſoul, and determines it towards God, ſo that the after-courſe of his life may be denominated a living to God, a living after the ſpirit; the love of God becomes the governing principle of his life, and the reaſon and meaſure of his ac-

tions; that, as he loves him above all things else, better than his own life; so he can truly, though sometimes with a doubtful trembling heart, resolve the ordinary course of his daily walk into that love as the governing principle of it.—I pray, I read, I hear, because I love God; I desire to be just, sober, charitable, meek, and patient, because I love God; herein appears the power of godliness, denied by too many that have the form. He in whom the love of God hath not such power and rule, whatever his fainter inclinations may be, is an ungodly man.

It now plainly appears that the holy Scriptures require in him who shall enjoy this blessedness, a mighty change of the very temper of his soul, as that which must dispose him to it; and it must therefore consist in the right framing of his heart towards God, to whom it is fixedly averse, and therefore not easily susceptible of such a change; and that any

ſlighter or more feeble inclination towards God will not ſerve the turn, but ſuch only whereby the ſoul is prevailingly and habitually turned to him.

The Satisfaction ariſing from our preſent Conformity to God, and the Love of God, in preparing his People for this Bleſſedneſs.

HAPPY diſcovery! welcome tidings! I know now which way to turn my eye, to direct my purſuit. I ſhall no longer ſpend myſelf in dubious toilſome wanderings, in anxious vain enquiry. To ſee and partake of the divine glory, to behold the bleſſed face of God, till his likeneſs be transfuſed through all my powers, and his entire image be perfectly formed in me—this is bleſſedneſs!

If I can but get a lively transforming ſight of God, I have enough; ſhew me the Father and it ſufficeth. Let the weary wandering ſoul bethink itſelf and retire to God: he will not mock thee with ſhadows as the world has done: "this is eternal life, to know him, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, whom he hath ſent."

Separate from Chriſt thou canſt not know nor ſee him with comfort; but the goſpel revelation gives thee a lovely proſpect of him, his glory ſhines in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, and when, by beholding it, thou art changed into the ſame likeneſs, and findeſt thyſelf gradually changing more and more from glory to glory, thou wilt find thyſelf accordingly in a gradual tendency towards ſatisfaction and bleſſedneſs.

Do but ſeriouſly ſet thyſelf to ſtudy, and contemplate the being and attributes of God; and then look upon him as through the Mediator: he is

willing to be reconciled to thee, and become thy God; and let thine eye dwell here till it affect thy heart, and the proper impress of the gospel be by the spirit of the Lord stampt upon it; till thou find thyself wrought to a compliance with his holy will, and his image formed in thee; and thou shalt soon experience thou art entering into his rest, and will relish a more satisfying pleasure in this blessed change than all thy worldly sensual enjoyments did ever afford.

The most contented and happy persons in the world are such as have most of a godly frame wrought into their spirits, that have hearts most tempered and conformed to God.

The true knowledge of God so directly tends to holiness, and that to contentment, that it may be concluded, a discontented person hath little of the one or the other: not much knowledge and less grace. He is so far from being like God, that we may say he hath not seen him.

Doth that perſon know God, or hath ever ſeen him, that falls not into the duſt, admiring ſo glorious a Majeſty, that ſubjects not himſelf to him with loyal affection, eſteeming it his only grand commandment to pleaſe and ſerve him! Hath that perſon ever ſeen God, that acknowledges him not a ſufficient portion, a full, all-comprehending good! hath he ſeen him that ſees not reaſon to truſt him, to commit all his concernments to him! hath he ſeen him that loves him not, and delights not in his love! hath he ſeen him that gives not all for him, and abandons not every private intereſt to eſpouſe his! And how evidently do theſe things tend to quiet and compoſe the ſoul! diſcontent proceeds from idolizing thoughts of ourſelves. It is rooted in ſelf-conceit, ſelf-dependence, and ſelf-love. One ſight of the divine glory would humble this idol ſelf, and bring it to nothing. A ſight of God melts the heart, breaks it under a ſenſe of ſin,

and compoſes it to a meek peaceful humility. What is the deſign of the goſpel, but to form men to live agreeable to that of heaven, and thus lead them to bleſſedneſs.

How great is the love of God, who prepares his people for ſuch bleſſedneſs! It is love to relieve a ſtranger, to ſpare an enemy; but to ſatisfy for ever them that were both, this ſure exceeds all the uſual meaſures of love. The love of God leaves none unſatisfied but the proud deſpiſers of it.

Now is the eternal Sabbath of love, now it enters into reſt; having finiſhed all its works, it views them over now with delight, for lo they are all good; its works of pardon, converſion, and ſanctification; its eſtabliſhing, quickening, comforting; all are good, and end in the ſatisfaction and repoſe of bleſſed ſouls. Now divine love puts on the crown, aſcends the throne; and the many myriads of glorified ſpirits fall down

bout it, and adore. Who can consider the unſpeakable ſatisfaction of thoſe bleſſed ſpirits, and not alſo reflect upon this exalted greatneſs of divine love!

What amazing love is this of the great God to a worm, not to give over till he has aſſimilated it to his own glory! till it appear as a ray of light, begotten of the Father of Lights! "Every one," ſaith the apoſtle, "that doth righteouſneſs is born of him:" and then it follows (behold what manner of love) "to be the ſons of God, is to be like "him, and to ſee him as he is."

Sure the love of God cannot be more powerfully expreſſed than in his firſt intending to make a poor ſoul like him, while he loves it with compaſſion; and then imprinting and perfecting that likeneſs, that he loves it with eternal delight. Love is here the firſt and the laſt, the beginning and the end.

The Unrighteous neceſſarily excluded from Bleſſedneſs.

IS righteouſneſs the only qualification for heaven? then it follows that the unrighteous are neceſſarily excluded, and have no part nor portion in this bleſſedneſs. Remember, ſinners, this is one of the unalterable determinations of the Goſpel, that without holineſs thou ſhalt never ſee God: thou canſt not behold his face but in righteouſneſs. And is it poſſible you ſhould think this to be true, and not think it a moſt important truth! Is it a ſmall matter in your account whether you ſhall be bleſſed or miſerable for ever?

Poſſibly you may think yourſelf righteous, becauſe, in your ordinary dealings, you are juſt, and wrong no man: but is he to be accounted a righteous perſon who thinks it fit to avoid wronging a man, but makes

o conſcience at all of wronging God? Is it righteous to live all thy days in a willing ignorance of the Author of thy being, never once to enquire, Where is God my Maker? Is it righteous to forget him days without number, not to have him from day to day in all thy thoughts? Is it righteous to eſtrange thyſelf from him, and live as without him in the world, while thou liveſt, moveſt, and haſt thy being in him? not to glorify him in whoſe hands thy breath is, to be a lover of pleaſure more than of God, a worſhipper in thy very ſoul of the creature more than the Creator? Is it righteous to harden thy heart againſt his fear and love, to live under his power and never reverence it; his goodneſs and never acknowledge it? is it righteous to deny the Lord that bought thee, to neglect the great ſalvation which he is the Author of? And whereas he came to bleſs thee, in turning thee from thine

iniquities, is it righteous wilfully to remain in an accurſed ſervitude to ſin, when he was made manifeſt to deſtroy the works of the devil; ſtill to yield thyſelf a captive at his will! He died, that thou mighteſt not any longer live to thyſelf, but to him that died for thee and roſe again—and that he might redeem thee from thy vain converſation. Thou art expreſsly told, that ſuch as ſtill lead ſenſual lives, mind earthly things, and have not their converſation in heaven, are enemies to the croſs of Chriſt.

Is it no unrighteouſneſs, that in theſe reſpects thy whole life ſhould be nothing but a contradiction to the very deſign of his dying? no unrighteouſneſs in thy obſtinate impenitency, in thy heart that melts not while a crucified Jeſus, amidſt his agonies and dying pangs, cries to thee from the croſs—"O ſinner, enough; thy hard heart breaks mine! yield at laſt, and turn to God." In

word, while thou pretendeſt thy-
lf a Chriſtian, is it righteous to
ead under foot the Son of God, to
lify his blood, and deſpiſe his ſpi-
t? is this the righteouſneſs thou
lkeſt of? are theſe thy qualifications
r the everlaſting bleſſedneſs? No:
ever thou thinkeſt to ſee God and
e happy in him, thou muſt have a
ighteouſneſs in thee reſembling
is: "if ye know that he is righte-
us, ye know that every one that
oth righteouſneſs is born of him."
Scripture tells us that righteouſ-
neſs tendeth to life: that to them
hat ſow righteouſneſs ſhall be
ſure reward; that the righ-
eous ſhall ſhine as the ſun in
he kingdom of their Father: let the
ighteous then "be ſtedfaſt, un-
moveable, always abounding in the
work of the Lord; for as much as
hey know their labour is not in vain
n the Lord."

Hope, the preſent Happineſs of the Saints.

IF the queſtion be aſked (as it was once of Alexander, when ſo freely diſtributing his treaſures among his followers) What do you reſerve for yourſelf? the reſolved Chriſtian makes (with him) that ſhort and brave reply, Hope; he lives upon things future and unſeen: "the juſt ſhall live by faith;" and it is the deſcription of that faith, that it is "the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen." Faith, upon the authority of the divine word and promiſe, perſuades the heart that there is ſuch a glorious ſtate reſerved for the ſaints, and preſents thoſe glories to its view; hope reaches forth to them triumphs over all attending difficulties, and poſſeſſes them: though I have not walked to and fro (may the ſoul ſay)

n thoſe upper regions, nor taken a
iew of the heavenly inheritance;
hough I have not been in the third
eaven, and ſeen the ineffable glory;
et the goſpel, which hath brought
ife and immortality to light, the
ord of the eternal God, which
ath revealed to me theſe glorious
hings, muſt be true; and I rejoice
n hope of eternal life, which God,
hat cannot lie, hath promiſed: let
he pur-blind, ſhort-ſighted ſenſualiſt
embrace this preſent world who can
ee no further; let me have my por-
ion in the world to come. May
ny ſoul always lie open to the im-
preſſion of the powers of the coming
world; and in this, ſo uſe every
hing, as to be under the power of
nothing!

What are the pleaſures of ſin, that
are but for a ſeaſon; or what the
ſufferings of this now, this moment
of affliction, to the glory that ſhall
be revealed, to the exceeding and
eternal glory! the Chriſtian conſi-

ders that patient afflicted godlineſs will triumph at laſt, when riotous raging wickedneſs ſhall lament for ever! He may for a time weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; he may be ſorrowful, but his ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy, and his joy none ſhall take from him. Surely this is the wiſdom that is from above, this is to be wiſe unto ſalvation. Do they deſerve to be thought wiſe, who are ſo buſily intent upon momentary trifles, and trifle with eternal concernments? that prefer vaniſhing ſhadows to the everlaſting glory? that follow lying vanities and forſake their own mercies? Will they not ceaſe to be wiſe in their own eyes alſo, when they ſee the end, and reap the fruit of their fooliſh choice! when they find the happineſs they preferred before their eternal one is quite over, and nothing remains to them of it but a ſorrowful remembrance! that the torment they were told would follow, is but now

beginning, and without end! when they hear from the mouth of their impartial Judge, Remember you in your life-time had your good things, and my faithful ſervants their evil; now they muſt be comforted, and you tormented! will they not then lament themſelves, and ſay, See thoſe are they whom we ſometimes held in deriſion; we fools counted their life madneſs, and their end without honour; but now how are they numbered among the ſons of God, and their lot is among the ſaints! they that were too wiſe to mind ſo mean a thing as religion, that could ſo wiſely baffle conſcience, and deceive their own ſouls; who had ſuch ingenious ſhifts to elude a conviction, and divert any ſerious thought from faſtening upon their mind; they will now know, that a circumſpect walking, a faithful redeeming of time, and improving it in order to eternity, was not to be as fools, but as wiſe!

Chriſtians exhorted to ſettle in their Judgments the true Notion of the heavenly Bleſſedneſs, and to compare with it the Temper of their own Minds.

HOW apt are we to reſt in ſome general and confuſed ideas of the heavenly bleſſedneſs, in which there is little either of efficacy or pleaſure! We deſcend not into a particular enquiry and conſideration what it is; our thoughts of it are gloomy and obſcure: hence it is that the ſpirits and converſations of Chriſtians have ſo little ſavour and appearance of heaven in them, and our ſpirits naturally liſtleſs and indifferent towards it; hence our lives are low and carnal; they look not as though we were ſeeking the heavenly country: this is owing to our negligence and infidelity; the bleſ-

ed God hath not concealed from us the glory of the other world; "life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel:" "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" it is a dutiful attention and reverential faith that must settle and fix the notion of this blessedness; here, therefore, we should exercise an authority over ourselves, awaken conscience to its proper work and business; and demand of it, Is it not reasonable that these divine discoveries should take place with me? hath not God spoken plainly enough? why should my heart any longer hang in doubt, or look wishfully towards future glory, as an unattainable good? Charge conscience with the duty it owes to God in such a case, and let his revelations be received with the reverence and resignation which they challenge; and in them study and contemplate the blessedness of awakened souls, till you have agreed with yourself fully

how to conceive of it; run over every part of it in your thoughts, view the several divine excellencies which you are hereafter to see and imitate, and think how every thing will contribute to the satisfaction and contentment of spirits: this is a matter of unspeakable consequence.

Resolve with yourselves to make the divine revelation of this blessedness the prime measure and reason of all your apprehensions concerning it, that when you demand of yourself, What do I conceive of the future blessedness? and why do I conceive so? the divine revelations may answer both the questions, "I apprehend what God hath revealed, and because he hath so revealed." Let your notion of this blessedness be not only true, but comprehensive and full, and as particular and positive as God's revelation will warrant; especially remember it is a spiritual blessedness that consists in your resting

and perfecting your ſpirits by the vi-
ſion and likeneſs of the holy God.

Get the notion of this bleſſedneſs deeply imprinted in your minds, ſo as to abide with you, that you may not always be at a loſs, and change your apprehenſions every time you come to think of it: let a once well-formed idea, a clear full ſtate of it be preſerved entire, and be as a lively image always before your eyes, which you may readily review upon all occaſions.

Having well fixed the notion of this bleſſedneſs in your mind, ſeriouſly reflect upon yourſelf, and compare the temper of your ſpirits with it, that you may find out how it is affected therein; and thence judge in what likelihood you are of enjoying it.

The general averſion of men's ſpirits to this neceſſary work of ſelf-reflection, is one of the moſt deplorable ſymptoms of degenerate humanity. The wickedneſs that hath

overſpread the nature of man, and a
ſeared conſciouſneſs and miſgiving,
hath made men afraid of themſelves,
and ſtudiouſly to decline all acquain-
tance with their own ſouls; to ſhun
themſelves as ghoſts and ſpectres:
you can hardly impoſe a ſeverer taſk
upon a wicked man, than to retire an
hour or two, and commune with
himſelf; he knows not how to face
his own thoughts; his own ſoul is a
devil to him; yet what power is there
in man more excellent than that of
reflecting, of turning his thoughts
upon himſelf? Senſe muſt here con-
feſs itſelf outdone; the eye that ſees
other objects cannot ſee itſelf: but
the mind, a rational ſun, can not on-
ly project its beams, but revert them,
and make its thoughts turn inward;
it can ſee its own face, contemplate
itſelf; and how uſeful an endow-
ment is this to the nature of man!
If he err, he might perpetuate his
error and wander infinitely, if he
had not this ſelf-reflecting power

and if he do well, never know without it the comfort of a rational self-approbation.

Among Christians that enjoy the benefit of the gospel-revelation, in which men may behold themselves as one may his natural face in a glass, how highly should this self-knowledge be prized, and how fully attained! The gospel discovers, at the same time, the deformities of the soul, and the means of attaining a true spiritual comeliness; it is itself the instrument of impressing the divine image and glory upon men's spirits; with piercing energy, it lays open the very thoughts of men's hearts, so thoroughly rips up and dissects the soul, directly turns and strictly holds a man's eye intent upon himself; and powerfully obliges the sinner to mind and study his own soul. Christianity aims not to make men rich, or great, or honourable, but to make them holy and fit them for God.

He therefore loſes all his labour and reward, and ſhews himſelf only a mere trifler in matters of religion, that makes not this the ſcope and mark of his Chriſtian profeſſion and practice; and herein he can do nothing without a conſtant ſelf-inſpection. As it therefore highly concerns, it well becomes a Chriſtian, under the goſpel, to be in a continual obſervation and ſtudy of himſelf, that he may know to what purpoſe he is a Chriſtian; and take notice what good impreſſions are made upon his ſpirit; whether he gain any thing by his religion? What more important queſtion than this;—in what poſture am I as to my laſt and chief end? how is my ſpirit framed towards it? am I ever likely to enjoy it?—yea or no? Enough to make any heart, not deplorably ſtupid, ſhake and tremble, that ſuch a thing ſhould be called into queſtion!

Methinks that the very mention of ſuch a bleſſedneſs ſhould naturally

prompt ſouls to bethink themſelves, Doth it belong to me? have I any thing to do with it? Where is that ſtupid ſoul that reckons it an indifferent thing to attain this bleſſed ſtate, or to fall ſhort of it!

When thou heareſt this is the common expectation of ſaints, to behold the face of God, and be ſatisfied with his likeneſs when they awake, canſt thou forbear to ſay with thyſelf, And what ſhall become of me when I awake? what kind of awakening ſhall I have? ſhall I awake amidſt the beams of glory, or the flames of wrath?

Stir up thy drowſy ſoul to a ſerious enquiry, how is it likely to fare with thee for ever!

Canſt thou ſay, thou art already certain of thy eternal bleſſedneſs? art thou ſo ſure that thou needeſt not enquire? Conſider a little, that certainty of ſalvation is no common thing!

That exhortation to a church of

saints, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling;" Christ's advice to his disciples, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate;" and St. Peter's, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure;" with many other passages of Scripture, prove this to be no common attainment.

Who would not think that reason and modesty had quite forsaken the world, to hear the vain boasts of the loose generality, compared with the humble solicitous doubts of many serious and experienced Christians: to see such, trembling about their soul concernments, who have walked with God, and served him long with prayers and tears, when multitudes, that have nothing to found a confidence upon but pride and ignorance, shall pretend themselves certain! Urge thy soul then with this question, again and again, Art thou certain, yea or no?

Is it a comfortable state to be un-

certain? and wilt thou remain uncertain? wilt thou ſit ſtill ſo till thou periſh? ſhall thy life hang in doubt, and thy ſoul be in jeopardy every hour, till the everlaſting flames reſolve the doubt, and put the matter out of queſtion with thee? how canſt thou paſs an hour in peace, while thou apprehendeſt it unlikely that thou ſhalt ſee the face, and be ſatisfied with the image of God!

Is it reaſonable to be ſecure in ſuch a ſtate of uncertainty! art thou reſolved to ſhut thine eyes and ſay, "Peace, peace!" if thou canſt not bear the *thought* of eternal miſery, how wilt thou bear the thing itſelf! canſt thou defer thy miſery by forgetting it; canſt thou wink hell into nothing, and put it out of being by putting it out of thy thoughts! hath not God furniſhed thee with a ſelf-reflecting power, by which thou art enabled to look into thyſelf! doth he not offer and afford to ſerious diligent ſouls the aſſiſtance of his bleſſed

Spirit, to guide and succeed their enquiry! the difficulty, though great, is not insuperable, and the necessity and advantage incomparably greater; the principal difficulty lies in thy aversion and unwillingness.

There can be no surer mark or rule to judge whether we are meet for the blessedness of heaven than this: How stand we affected towards it! in what disposition are our hearts thereto! Those fruits of righteousness by which the soul is qualified to appear without offence in the day of Christ, the several graces of the sanctifying Spirit, are nothing else but so many holy principles, all disposing the soul towards this blessedness, and the way to it.

Mortification, self-denial, and godly sorrow take it off from other objects, the world, self, and sin; repentance turns the course of its motion towards God, the end; faith directs it through Christ, the way;

love makes it move freely, desire earnestly, joy pleasantly, hope confidently, fear circumspectly, and posseſs a constant and perſevering patience: all conſpire to give the ſoul a right diſpoſition towards this bleſſedneſs.

The rule thou art to judge by is ſure; they ſhall have heaven whoſe hearts are intent upon it, and framed to it; this ſhall be the rule of God's final judgement: when God ſhall judge every one according to his works, eternal life ſhall then be the portion of them "who by patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality!" What can be more plain, "they "ſhall have eternal life that ſeek it."

Such as are enemies of the croſs of Chriſt mind earthly things, and their end will be deſtruction; but the true Chriſtian hath his converſation in heaven: thoſe who are riſen with Chriſt, and who ſhall appear with him in glory, are required to

ſet their minds on things above; thoſe who follow not this council, and mortify not their earthly members, are the children of diſobedience, upon whom the wrath of God ſhall come. The faith the juſt live by, is the ſubſtance of things hoped for; ſuch believers are confeſſed ſtrangers on earth, and ſeekers of the better heavenly country; whence it is ſaid, "God will not be aſhamed to be called their God;" plainly implying, that as for low terrene ſpirits that love to creep on the earth, and embrace dunghills, God will be aſhamed of them, and will for ever diſdain a relation to them; and if we will be determined by the expreſs word of our great Redeemer, to whom we owe all the hopes of this bleſſedneſs, when he had been adviſing not to lay up treaſure on earth, but in heaven, he preſently adds,—"where your treaſure is, there will your hearts be alſo." If thy treaſure, thy great intereſt, thy

most valuable good be above, that will attract thy heart, it will certainly be disposed thitherward.

Consider carefully in as much as this blessedness is thy end, thy supreme good, thy heart must be set upon it above any other enjoyment. It is not a faint slight inclination that will serve the turn, but such as will bespeak it a man's business to seek heaven, his main work, and give ground to say of him, his heart is there: it is not the faint desire, the cold wish, or lazy inconstant endeavour; no, it is a steady, prevalent, victorious direction of heart towards the future glory that must be the ground of thy hope to enjoy it; and therefore in this deal faithfully with thy own soul, and demand of it, Dost thou esteem this blessedness above all things else? do the thoughts of it continually return upon thee, and thy mind and heart naturally run out to it? are thy chiefest cares taken up about it, lest thou shouldest

fall short, and suffer a disappoint-
ment? hath it a sweet and grateful
relish to thy soul? dost thou bend all
thy powers to pursue and press on
towards it? Urge thyself to give
answers truly to such enquiries as
these.

Such, whose spirits are either most
highly raised and lifted up to heaven,
or most deeply depressed and sunk
into the earth, may make the clearest
judgment of themselves. With
those who are of a middle temper,
the trial may be more difficult, yet
not fruitless if it be managed with
serious diligence, though no certain
conclusion or judgement be made;
for the true design and use of all such
enquiries and reflections upon our-
selves is, not to bring us into a state
of cessation from further endeavours,
as if we had nothing more to do but
to keep us in a wakeful temper of
spirit, that we may not forget our-
selves in the great business we have
yet before us; but to urge us to go

on with renewed vigor through the whole courſe of renewed endeavours; wherein we are to be ſtill converſant till we have attained our utmoſt token and end, "preſſing toward the mark for the prize of the high-calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus."

Thoſe who ſee Reaſon to ſuſpect themſelves averſe to the heavenly Bleſſedneſs, exhorted to be earneſt in their Endeavour after a Temper of Mind ſuitable to it.

UPON the moſt ſerious enquiry, doſt thou find thyſelf wholly diſaffected and unſuitable to the heavenly bleſſedneſs? This is no condition of ſoul to be relied on, unleſs thou art provided to encounter the terrors of eternal darkneſs, and endure the torture of everlaſting burnings; yet ſad experience tells us, how

difficult it is to ſay any thing that will move a carnal heart! We ſometimes fill our mouths with arguments, and our hearts with hope, and think, ſure they will now yield; but they eſteem our ſtrongeſt reaſonings but as ſtraw and rotten wood; and laugh at divine threatenings, as Leviathan at the ſhaking of the ſpear: yea, and when we have convinced them, yet we have done nothing; tho' we have got their judgment and conſcience on our ſide and their own, their luſts reluctuate and carry all; they will have their way though they periſh! We ſee them periſhing under our very eye, and we cry unto them in thy name, O Lord, to turn and live; but they regard us not: for theſe things ſometimes we weep in ſecret, and our eyes trickle down with tears; but we muſt ſpeak, whether men will hear or forbear. O how ſolemn a buſineſs is it to treat with ſouls! I write impreſſed with ſtrong ſolicitude what ſhall be

come of these lines; with what effect they will be read by those whom they most concern: and with some doubt whether it were best to write or forbear; lest we add to the account and torment of many at last: but sense of duty towards all, and the hope of doing good to some, must prevail.

And canst thou not consider, and reason the matter thus: O my soul, what is the reason that thou so drawest back and hangest off from thy God? that thou art so unwilling to be blessed in him? that thou shouldest rather venture to run thyself upon eternal perdition? what cause hath he ever given thee to be disaffected unto him? hath he ever done thee hurt? dost thou think he will not accept a returning soul? All that is to give the lie to his gospel; and it becomes not a perishing wretch so to provoke him in whom is all its hope. Is the eternal glory an undesirable thing, or the everlasting burnings tolerable? Canst thou find a way

of being for ever bleſſed without God? or is there a ſufficient preſent pleaſure in thy ſinful diſtance from God, to outweigh heaven and hell? Dareſt thou venture upon a reſolution of giving God and Chriſt their laſt refuſal? or ſay thou wilt never hearken to them more? or dareſt thou venture to do what thou dareſt not reſolve, and act the wickedneſs thou canſt not think of? ſcorn eternal Majeſty and love! ſpurn and trample a bleeding Saviour!

Conſider how thou ſhalt awake at the great day! thou ſhalt awake not into the mild and cheerful light of that bleſſed day, wherein the ſaints of the moſt High hold their ſolemn joyful triumph! but thou ſhalt awake unto that great and terrible day of the Lord, a day of darkneſs and not light! O happy thou mighteſt thou never awake; might the grave conceal thee, and its ſilent darkneſs cover thee! but ſince thou muſt awake then, how much more

happy would it be, if thou wouldeſt ſuffer thyſelf to be awakened now! What, to loſe and endure ſo much, becauſe thou wilt not now a little beſtir thyſelf, and look about thee!

Methinks, if thou be a man, and not a ſtone, if thou haſt a reaſonable ſoul about thee, thou ſhouldeſt preſently fall to work, and rather ſpend thy days in ſerious thoughts, and prayers, and tears, than run the hazard of loſing ſo tranſcendent a glory, and of ſuffering miſery, which, as now thou art little able to conceive, thou wilt then be leſs able to endure.

What courſe wouldeſt thou take in any other diſtreſs, wherein thou kneweſt not how to help thyſelf? would it not force thee down upon thy knees, and ſet thee a crying to the God of mercy for relief! Fall down therefore low before him; proſtrate thyſelf at the footſtool of his mercy; tell him thou underſtandeſt him to be the Father of ſpirits, and the Father of mercies; that

thou haſt heard of his great mercy and pity towards the ſpirits of men in their forlorn lapſed ſtate;—what a bleſſedneſs he hath deſigned for them; what means he hath choſen to bring them to it:—tell him thou only needeſt a temper of ſpirit ſuitable to this bleſſedneſs he invites thee to; that thou canſt not change thy ſenſual earthly heart, but thou knoweſt he eaſily can; thou art come to implore his help, that this bleſſed Spirit may deſcend and breathe upon thy ſtupid dead ſoul, and ſweetly incline and move it towards him; that it may eternally reſt in him; and that thou mayeſt not periſh, after ſo much done in order to thy bleſſedneſs, only for want of a heart to entertain it: tell him thou comeſt upon his gracious encouragement, having heard he is as ready to give his Spirit to them that aſk him as parents give bread to their craving children, rather than a ſtone: that it is for life thou beggeſt; that it is not eaſy for

thee to think of perishing for ever; that thou canst not desist and give up all thy hopes; that thou shalt shortly perish if he hear and help thee not. In this way "seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is nigh; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off for ever!"

Christians exhorted to a gradual Improvement and Meetness for the heavenly Blessedness.

DO we expect to be one day perfectly happy, we must in the mean time labour to be always growing: we have not yet attained, and must therefore continue "pressing forward to this mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

If we find in ourselves any dispo-

ſition towards this heavenly bleſſedneſs, we muſt endeavour to get the temper of our ſpirits made daily more ſuitable to it; and ſenſible how far ſhort we are of this glory, ſtir up our ſouls to more vigorous endeavours after it.

Let us endeavour after a growing knowledge of God, and conformity to him. Do we hope to ſee him face to face, to be always in his preſence, beholding his glory! and ſhall we now live as ſtrangers to him! "The path of the juſt is as the ſhining light that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day."

"If we follow on to know the Lord," he will viſit us with increaſing light; and ere long it will be perfect day.

How great is our offence and loſs, that we live not in more conſtant views of God!

Mindfulneſs of God is the living ſpring of all holy and devout affections, ſets all the wheels a-going,

and makes the ſoul as the chariots of Aminadab,

How often in Scripture is forgetting God uſed as a character, as a full expreſſion of ſin in general. "The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God."

Who, that underſtands any thing of the nature and Majeſty of God, dare call him for a witneſs of his ſinning! The worſt of men would find themſelves under ſome reſtraint, could they but prevail upon themſelves to ſit down ſometimes, and ſolemnly think of God: much more would it prove an advantage to ſuch as ſin within the nearer call and reach of mercy.

Even ſuch as lead the ſtricteſt lives, and are ſeldom found to tranſgreſs, do not their ſins begin with forgetting God! Did they eye God more, would they not ſin leſs frequently, and with greater regret!

You his ſaints, that have made a

covenant with him by ſacrifice, that profeſs the greateſt love and devotedneſs to him, and ſeem willing yourſelves to become ſacrifices, and lay down your lives for his ſake; what! is it a harder thing to give him a look or a thought!

Let us bethink ourſelves, are not the principal diſtempers of our minds, and diſorders of our lives, to be attributed to this! If we had God in our eye, ſhould we be guilty of ſo many omiſſions in duty? or ſerve him with ſuch declining backward hearts? ſhould we dare to let paſs a day, in the evening of which we might write down, Nothing done for God this day! or ſhould we ſerve him as a hard maſter, with ſluggiſh deſpondent minds?

Hence ſuch hanging of hands; ſuch feebleneſs of knees; ſuch lazineſs and indifferency; ſo little of an active zeal and laborious diligence; ſo little fervency of ſpirit in ſerving the Lord! Hence, alſo, ſuch an

averſion to hazardous ſervices, ſuch fear of attempting any duty, however important, that may prove coſtly or dangerous, It is becauſe we look not to him that is inviſible!

As to things that are forbidden; ſhould we be ſo proud, ſo paſſionate. ſo earthly, ſo ſenſual, if we had God more in view!

Should we ſo much ſeek ourſelves, and indulge our own wills and humours? drive a deſign with ſuch ſolicitude and intention of mind for our private intereſt? ſhould we walk in ſuch a latitude, and more conſult our own inclination than our rule; allow ourſelves in ſo much vanity of converſation, did we mind God as we ought! And do we not ſenſibly puniſh ourſelves in this neglect? What a diſmal chaos is this world, while we ſee not God in it! to live deſtitute of the divine preſence, to diſcern no beam of the heavenly glory!

What can we make of creatures,

what of the daily events of providence, if we ſee not in this the glory of a Deity; if we do not contemplate and adore the divine wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, diffuſed everywhere!

To have God always in view, as the director and end of all our actions; to conſult him in all things, and implore his guidance and bleſſing in every purſuit; upon all occaſions to direct our prayers to him, and look up; to make our eye await his commanding look, ready to receive all intimations of his will; to be as thoſe miniſters of his that are always ready to do his pleaſure; to make our eye do him homage, and expreſs our dependence and truſt; to approve ourſelves in every thing to him, and act as always in his preſence, and expoſed to the notice of his eye, and contented that he ſhould ſearch us and try us: ſurely there is much of heaven in this life; ſo we ſhould endeavour to live here.

This is to walk in the light, amidſt a ſerene mild light, that infuſes no unquiet thoughts, admits no guilty fears, nothing that can diſturb or annoy us:—

To eye God in all our comforts, and obſerve the ſmiling aſpect of his face, when he diſpenſes them to us:

To eye him in all our afflictions, and conſider the paternal wiſdom that inſtructs us in them; how would this increaſe our mercies, and mitigate our troubles!

To eye him in his providence, and conſider how all events are with infinite wiſdom diſpoſed into an apt ſubſerviency to his holy will and ends. What difficulties would hence be ſolved; and how much would it contribute to the eaſe and quiet of our minds!

To eye him in his Chriſt, the expreſs image of his perſon, the brightneſs of his glory; and in the Chriſtian œconomy, the goſpel-revelation,

and ordinances through which he manifeſts himſelf:

To behold him in the poſture wherein he ſaves ſouls, clad with the garments of ſalvation, girt with power, and apparelled with love, travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength, mighty to ſave:

To view him addreſſing himſelf to allure and win to him the hearts of ſinners, when he diſcovers himſelf in Chriſt Jeſus, in the goſpel of reconciliation:

To behold him in his beloved Son, entering into human fleſh, pitching his tabernacle among men, hanging out his enſigns of peace, laying his trains, ſpreading his net, the cords of a man, the bands of love:

To ſee him in his Chriſt, aſcending the croſs, lifted up to draw all men to him; and conſider that mighty love of juſtice and of ſouls, both ſo eminently conſpicuous in that ſtupendous ſacrifice: Here to

fix our eyes, looking to Jesus, and beholding him whom we have pierced:

To see his power and glory, as they are wont to be seen in his sanctuary; to observe him in the solemnities of his worship, wherein he holds communion with his saints, when he seats himself amidst them on the throne of grace, receives their addresses, dispenses the tokens and pledges of his love: into what transports might these visions put us every day.

Let us then stir up our drowsy souls, open our heavy eyes, and turn them upon God; inure and habituate them to a constant view of his (yet veiled) face, that we may not see him only by casual glances, but as those that seek his face; and make it our business to gain a thorough knowledge of him.

But let us remember, that all our present visions of God must aim at a further conformity to him. Be con-

ſtantly intent upon this buſineſs of ſpiritual growth, mind it as your moſt ſolemn and daily buſineſs, and hold on in your courſe with freſh and conſtant vigour, ſtill reaching forth, and preſſing on towards the mark.

In this great buſineſs we, alas! ſeem to dream! He that hath been obſerved ten or twenty years ago to be proud, covetous, or paſſionate, ſtill remains ſo.

What, always learning, and yet never coming to the knowledge of the truth—as it is in Jeſus: to the putting off the old, and putting on the new man!

Surely we do not ſeriouſly intend the perfecting of holineſs: to make a real progreſs in our way and work, and to get ſtill nearer heaven, as we draw nearer to the end of our days on earth.

We too contentedly confine ourſelves within certain limits, and aim not as we ſhould at a ſpiritual excel-

lency: this is the temper of many that have long trodden the path of (at leaſt an external) religion.

They perform their ſtated taſk of religious exerciſes, and ſhun the groſſer vices of the time, and reſolve never to go higher: much like the character that was once given of a great man, "That he followed not the more eminent virtues, yet that he hated vice." And it is a true cenſure that a barbarian is ſaid to have given of that middle temper, that dull indifferency—"What is equally diſtant from being the matter either of praiſe or puniſhment, is upon no terms to be accounted a virtue."

We purſue not our growth and ſelf-improvement in our ſpiritual ſtate, with that conſtancy we ought; we are off and on; "our ſpirits are not ſteadily intent; we are unſtable as water; how can we excel?" God hath not put us on ſo fruitleſs a taſk, wherein our utmoſt labour and diligence ſhall profit nothing: let us

therefore ſtrive more vigorouſly, and pray with more earneſt importunity; conſider and plead it with God, that he hath ſet before thee the hope of ſuch a ſtate, wherein thou art to be perfectly like him; and ſhalt thou, (that muſt hereafter be like God) be now like a clod of earth? Thou art now his child, and though thou art yet in thy minority, yet may not ſomething be ſpared out of ſo large an eſtate hereafter deſigned for thee, that thou mayeſt now live worthy of ſuch a Father, and ſuitable to thy expected inheritance!

Chriſtians directed to raiſe their Deſires above the preſent State, and to preſs forward, with joyful Expectation of the future Bleſſedneſs.

IF we gain but the top of mount Tabor, we are apt to ſay, it is good to be here, and forget the lon-

ger journey yet before us; loth to think of a further advance. Were our ſpirits right, how far ſoever we may have ſuppoſed ourſelves to have attained, it would be matter of continual joy to us to think that higher perfection is ſtill attainable; our ſouls can yet comprehend more.

Let us Chriſtians beſtir ourſelves; let us open our eyes upon the eternal glory; let us view it well, and then demand of our ſouls, why are our deſires ſo faint and ſlothful? why do they ſo ſeldom pierce through the intervening diſtance, and reach home to what they profeſſedly aim at? ſo rarely touch this bleſſed mark? How can we forbear to be angry with ourſelves, that ſo glorious an end ſhould not more powerfully attract! that our hearts ſhould not more ſenſibly find themſelves drawn, and all the powers of the ſoul be ſet on work, by the attractive power of that glory!

Let us think within ourſelves, Can we anſwer it to God, or our own

ſouls, to indulge ourſelves in a continual negligence of our eternal bleſſedneſs! a bleſſedneſs conſiſting in the viſion and participation of the divine glory!

Have we been dreaming all this time, while God hath been revealing to us this glorious ſtate, and ſetting this lovely proſpect before our eyes? did it become us not to open our eyes, while he was opening heaven to us, and repreſenting the ſtate which he deſigned to bring us to? or will we ſay, we have ſeen it, and yet deſire it not? have we been deaf and dead, while he hath been conſtantly calling us into eternal glory? hath he been ſpeaking all along to ſenſeleſs ſtatues, to ſtocks and ſtones, while he expected reaſonable living ſouls ſhould receive the voice, and return an obedient and complying anſwer? And what anſwer could be expected to ſuch a call, but this? We deſire it Lord, we would fain be there.

And if we ſay we have not been all this while aſleep; we ſaw the light that ſhone upon us; we heard the voice that called us; how ſhall we then excuſe ourſelves, that our deſires were not moved? that our ſouls were not preſently in a flame? Was it that we thought all a mere fiction? that we durſt not give credit to his word, when it brought us the report of everlaſting glory?

Surely this is the truth of our caſe! We ſhould feel this heavenly fire always burning in our breaſts, if our infidelity did not quench the flame: if we did believe we ſhould deſire.

But doth not the thoughts of this ſhake our very ſouls, and fill us with horror and trembling? we that ſhould be turned into indignation, and ready to burn ourſelves and all about us with our own flame, if one ſhould give us the lie—that we ſhould dare to put the lie upon the eternal truth! on him whoſe word gave ſtability

and being to the world; who made and ſuſtains all things by it!

That awful word! that word which ſhivers rocks and melts down mountains! that makes the animate creation tremble! that can in a moment blaſt all things, and diſſolve the frame of heaven and earth!—Is that become with us a fabulous lying breath? thoſe God-breathed oracles! thoſe heavenly records! which diſcover and deſcribe this bleſſed ſtate! Are they falſe and fooliſh legends?

What advantage would it be to the eternal Being to delude a poor worm?

If thou dare not impute it to him, from whence could it proceed? from a good man or a bad? Could a good mind form ſo horribly wicked a deſign, to impoſe an univerſal deluſion and lie upon the world, in the name of the true and holy God? or could a wicked mind frame a deſign ſo directly levelled againſt wickedneſs? or is there any thing that ſo

naturally tends to form the world to ſobriety, holineſs, and purity of converſation, as the diſcovery of this future ſtate of glory?

If thou canſt not excuſe thy infidelity, be aſhamed of thy ſo cold and ſluggiſh deſires of this glorious ſtate.

And doth it not argue a low ſordid ſpirit, not to deſire and aim at the perfection thou art capable of? not to deſire that bleſſedneſs, which alone is ſuitable and ſatisfying to a reaſonable and ſpiritual being?

Is the Father of ſpirits thy Father? is the world of ſpirits thy country? art thou allied to that bleſſed family, and yet not deſirous of the ſame bleſſedneſs? O poor low ſpirit! that ſuch a world as this ſhould withhold thee from the deſire and purſuit of ſuch glory! Methinks that ſhame ſhould compel thee to quit the name of a ſaint or a man; to forbear numbering thyſelf with any that pretend to immortality; and go ſeek paſture

among the beasts of the field, with them which live that poor low animal life that thou dost, and expect no other!

Is this thy gratitude to the Father of glory? the requital of the kindness, yea, and of the blood of thy Redeemer?

If this blessedness were not desirable for itself, methinks the offerer's hand should be a sufficient endearment!

But is it not unnatural towards thyself, as well as impiety towards God, not to desire eternal blessedness?

Wouldest thou not think him unnatural that should kill his brother? assassinate his father? starve his child? What shall be said of him that destroys himself? How shall that soul lament that ever it was thine! and say, O that I had rather been of any lower kind! to have animated a fly, to have inspired a vile worm, rather than have served

reaſonable beaſt, that by me knew
he good it would never follow, and
id not deſire!

But if thou haſt any ſuch deſires,
n a low degree, after this bleſſedneſs,
s thou thinkeſt may entitle thee to
he name that thou beareſt of a ſaint
r Chriſtian, is it not unnatural to
urſue it with ſuch ſlothful deſires?
or the ſame reaſon thou doſt deſire
at all, thou ſhouldeſt deſire it much;
ea, and ſtill more, till thou attain
, and be ſwallowed up in it, thy
eſt and laſt good. Thou canſt ne-
er deſire too much.

Is it not a matter of ſhame and
rror, that thou ſhouldeſt deſire thy
leſſedneſs ſo faintly as not to know
hether thou truly deſire it at all!
is true, that a certainty amongſt
ch as may be ſincere is very little
ommon: but whence proceeds it,
ut from their too common indulged
oth, out of which all this is deſigned
awaken thee!

Thou wouldeſt be aſhamed to ſtand

forth, and profeſs openly to men that thou deſireſt an earthly felicity more than a bleſſedneſs in heaven; or, at leaſt, that thou art ſo indifferent, and the ſcales hang ſo even with thee, that thou canſt hardly tell which way they incline moſt: and art thou not aſhamed this ſhould be thy uſual temper, how much ſoever thou conceal it from the notice and obſervation of the world?

The deſire of bleſſedneſs is the life of religion; all duties and exerciſes of piety are, without it, but empty formalities, ſolemn pieces of pageantry; every ſervice done to God is but the ſacrifice of a fool, if not animated by the deſire of final bleſſedneſs in him. Without this religion is not itſelf; a continuance in well-doing is, as it were, the body of it; and a ſeeking glory and immortality the ſoul and ſpirit: the deſire of a heavenly country muſt run through the whole courſe of our earthly pilgrimage.

This renders the people of God worthy of him who hath called them to his kingdom and glory: had they been of low terrene ſpirits, he would have accounted it a ſhame to be called their God.

But in as much as they deſire the heavenly country, have learned to trample this terreſtrial world, cannot be contained within this lower ſphere, nor ſatisfy themſelves in earthly things, but diſcover a certain excellency of ſpirit God, is not aſhamed to own a relation to them, before all the world, and to be called their God.

Theſe deſires after bleſſedneſs are of divine original; an infuſion from the bleſſed God himſelf; he that hath wrought us to the ſelf-ſame thing is God.

They are obedient deſires.—How lovely and becoming a thing is it, when God touches the heart with a ſtamp and impreſs of glory, and it immediately turns itſelf to that very point, and ſtands directly bent

towards the ſtate of glory! when the heart is not wayward or perverſe, but yields itſelf to God, and complies with the divine pleaſure!

Such deſires have much in them of a childlike ingenuity. When this is the intimate ſenſe of the ſoul, Shew me the Father, and it ſufficeth. To deſire the fulleſt conformity to his nature and will; to be perfect as that heavenly Father is perfect; what doth better become a child?

They are the moſt generous deſires: they aim at perfection, the higheſt that created nature is capable of. Not contented to have had ſome glances of divine glory, ſome ſtrokes and lines of his image, they aſpire to full-eyed viſions, to a perfect likeneſs.

They are the moſt victorious deſires: they ride in triumph over the world, and every ſublunary thing! have in ſome good degree conquered ſenſual inclinations, and got the maſtery over terrene diſpoſitions and affections! With what holy con-

tempt and ſcorn of every earthly thing doth that lofty ſoul quit this dirty world, and aſcend, powerfully carried by its own deſires towards that bleſſed ſtate!

When deſires after this glory are once awakened into an active lively vigour; when the fire is kindled, and the flame aſcends, and this refined ſpirit is joyfully aſcending therein, ſee if you can draw it back, and make it believe this world a more regardable thing.

Should not theſe conſiderations make thee in love with this bleſſed frame of ſpirit? and reſtleſs till thou find thyſelf incapable of being ſatisfied with any thing but divine likeneſs?

Chriſtians reminded of their high Hopes and Expectations, and exhorted to live more like the Children of God, and Heirs of Heaven.

SHOULD we give a ſtranger to Chriſtianity an account of the Chriſtian hopes, and tell him what they expect to be, and enjoy ere long, he would ſurely expect to find ſo many angels dwelling in human fleſh, and reckon when he came among them, that he ſhould be as amidſt the heavenly choir, every one full of joy and praiſe! he would expect to find us living on earth as the inhabitants of heaven, as ſo many pieces of immortal glory, lately dropped down from above, and ſhortly again returning thither.

He would expect to find every where, in the Chriſtian world, incarnate glory. ſparkling through the

verſhadowing veil; and wonder ow this earthly ſphere ſhould be ble to contain ſo many great ſouls: ut when he draws nearer to us, and bſerves the courſe and carriage of ur lives; when he ſees us walk as ther men, and conſiders the ſtrange iſagreement of our daily converſa-ion to our great and avowed hopes, nd how little ſenſe of joy and plea-ure we appear to derive from them; would he not be ready to ſay, ſure ome or other, willing to amuſe the world with ſome ſtrange thing, have compoſed a religion for theſe men, which they themſelves underſtand nothing of; if they do adopt and own it for theirs, they underſtand not their own pretences; they are taught to ſpeak ſome big words, or to give a faint or ſeeming aſſent to ſuch as ſpeak them in their names; but it is impoſſible they ſhould be in good earneſt, or believe themſelves in what they ſay and profeſs.

And what reply then ſhould we

be able to make? for who can think that any who acknowledge a God, and understand at all what that name imports, should value, at so low a rate as we do, the eternal fruition of his glory, and a present sonship to him the pledge of so great an hope: he that is born heir to great honours and possessions, though he is upon great uncertainties as to the enjoyment of them, yet when he comes to understand his possibilities and expectations, how big doth he look and speak, what grandeur doth he put on! his hopes form his spirit and deportment; but is it proportionably so with us? do our hopes fill our hearts with joy, our mouths with praise, and clothe our faces with a cheerful aspect, and make a holy alacrity appear in all our conversation! The Christian's joy is not a presumptuous confidence, a vain ostentation; it is a modest humble exultation, a serious joy, suitable to his solid hope; his joy excites itself

with a ſteady lively vigour, equally removed from vain lightneſs and ſtupidity; he forgets not that he is far leſs than the leaſt of God's mercies, but diſowns not his title to the greateſt of them: he abaſes himſelf to the duſt in the ſenſe of his own vileneſs, but in the admiration of divine grace he riſes high as heaven: in his humiliation he affects to level himſelf only with worms; in his joy and praiſe with angels: he is never unwilling to diminiſh himſelf; but afraid of detracting any thing from the love of God, or the effects of that love.

The more he apprehends his own unworthineſs, the more he is wrapt up into a wonderful joy, that ſuch bleſſedneſs ſhould be his portion.

But how little do we find in ourſelves of this bleſſed frame of ſpirit! how remote are we from it! Let us enquire a little into our own ſouls; are there not too apparent ſymptoms

of the little joy we take in the fore-thoughts of future bleſſedneſs?

How few thoughts have we of it! What any delight in, they remember often.

It is ſaid of the ſame perſon, that "his delight is in the law of the Lord, and that in his law doth he meditate day and night;" and when the Pſalmiſt profeſſes his own delight in God's ſtatutes, he adds: "I will not forget thy word." Should we not be as unapt to forget heaven, if our delight were there? but do not days paſs with us, wherein we can allow ourſelves no leiſure to mind the eternal glory, when yet vanities throng in upon us without any obſtruction or check?

Allow me to remark, How ſeldom is this bleſſed ſtate the ſubject of our diſcourſe! how often do Chriſtians meet, and not a word of heaven! O heavy and carnal hearts! our home and eternal bleſſedneſs appear to be forgotten among us! How often

may a perſon converſe with us ere he underſtand our relation to the heavenly country! If exiles meet in a foreign land, what pleaſant diſcourſes have they of home! they ſuffer not one another to forget it!

Such was their remembrance of Sion, who ſat together bemoaning themſelves by the river of Babylon, making mention of it; and methinks it ſhould be our common reſolution too: "If we forget thee, O Jeruſalem! if we forget to make mention of thee, O thou city of the living God! let our right hand forget her cunning; our tongue ſhall ſooner cleave to the roof of our mouth;" and ſo it would be, did we prefer that heavenly Jeruſalem above our chief joy.

How little effect hath our belief of this glory upon us; it ſerves not to outweigh the ſmalleſt trouble!

If we have not our carnal deſire in every thing gratified; if any thing falls out croſs to our inclinations,

this glory goes for nothing with us; our diſcontents ſwallow up our hopes and joys, and heaven is reckoned as a thing of nought. If, when outward troubles afflict or threaten us, we could have the certain proſpect of better days, that would ſenſibly revive and pleaſe us; yea, we ſometimes pleaſe ourſelves with very uncertain ground of hope; but to be told of a recompenſe at the reſurrection of the juſt; of a day when we ſhall ſee the face of God, and be ſatisfied with his likeneſs; this is inſipid, and affords us but cold comfort: the uncertain things of time ſignify more with us than the certain things of eternity.

Can we think then that it is well with us, or ſuffer with patience ſuch a diſtemper of mind? But the remedy muſt lie within, in pleading with God and thy own ſoul.

Conſider that ſpiritual joy is incumbent upon thee, as an indiſpenſable duty: ſome moroſe ſpirits think themſelves obliged to baniſh

very thing of that kind from their religion, and fancy it only consists in sour and righteous severities; others think it arbitrary and indifferent, or that if they live in a continual sadness and dejection of mind, it is only their infelicity, not their fault.

What then mean such words as these? "Her ways are ways of pleasantness.—The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance: the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places."

Do such precepts as these carry no meaning? "Delight thyself in the Lord! Rejoice in the Lord always? and again I say, rejoice!" Do not think you are permitted to extinguish so considerable a principle of the divine life.

The word of life was purposely written to draw souls into fellowship with the Father and the Son, that their joy might be full. The ministers of this gospel are stiled the helpers of their joy: and sure you will not think any object more proper

and ſuitable to exerciſe this joy upon, than the heavenly bleſſedneſs, which is in itſelf a fulneſs of joy, even the joy of our Lord.

Keep faith in exerciſe.

We have much talk of faith among us, and have the name often in our mouths; but how few are the real lively believers! Is it to be thought that ſuch bleſſedneſs ſhould not more affect our hearts! nay, would it not raviſh away our very ſouls, did we thoroughly believe it! and were it our preſent daily work, to renew the bonds of a vital union with the bleſſed God, in whom we expect to be bleſſed for ever!

Could that be without previous joy and pleaſure? It is not talking of faith, but living by it, that will give us the experience of heavenly delights and joys.

Take heed of going, in thy practice, againſt thy light; of perſiſting in a courſe of known or ſuſpected ſin; leſt it fill thy mind with fright-

ful apprehenſions of God, render the ſight of his face terrible to thy thoughts, and a ſatisfaction with his likeneſs the moſt impoſſible thing! Let a good underſtanding and correſpondence be continued between God and thee; that this may be thy rejoicing, the teſtimony of a good conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not according to fleſhly wiſdom, but the grace of God, thou haſt had thy converſation. Take God for a witneſs of thy ways; ſtudy to carry thyſelf acceptably towards him, and unto all well-pleaſing; let that be thy ambition, to ſtand right in his thoughts; to appear gracious in his eye: Hold faſt thy integrity, that thy heart may not reproach thee, as long as thou liveſt. If iniquity be in thy hand, put it away; then ſhalt thou lift up thy face without ſpot or fear. Be a faithful ſubject of that kingdom of God, which conſiſts firſt of righteouſneſs, and then in peace and joy

in the Holy Ghoſt: ſo ſhalt thou daily behold the face of God in righteouſneſs and pleaſure.

Watch and arm thyſelf againſt the too forcible impreſſions of ſenſible objects; a ſenſual earthly mind cannot taſte heavenly delights; "they that are after the fleſh do ſavour the things of the fleſh; they that are after the Spirit, the things of the ſpirit." Labour to be thoroughly mortified towards this world, and the preſent ſtate of things; keep natural appetites under reſtraint.

Senſuality is an impure thing; heavenly refined joy cannot live amidſt ſo much filth.

If thou give thy ſoul too much liberty in things lawful, it will ſoon get advantage to domineer, and keep thy ſoul in a depreſſing ſervitude: abridge it then, and cut it ſhort, that thy ſoul may be enlarged and at liberty.

Having emptied thy mind of what is earthly and carnal, apply and turn

to this bleſſed theme. The moſt excellent and the vileſt objects are like to thee, while thou mindeſt them not. Thy thoughts poſſibly bring thee in nothing but vexation and trouble, when they would as readily bring in joy and pleaſure, didſt thou turn them to proper objects. It is as eaſy to think of the heavenly glory as of an earthly croſs.

We complain the world troubles us; then what do we here? why get we not up in our ſpirits into the quieter regions!

What trouble would the thoughts of future glory be to us? how are thoughts and wits ſet on work for this fleſh! but we would have our ſouls flouriſh as the lilies, without their own care; yea, we make them toil for torture, and not for joy; revolve an affliction a thouſand times before and after it comes, and have never done with it, when eternal bleſſedneſs gains not a thought!

Plead earneſtly with God for his Spirit. This Spirit is the very earneſt of our inheritance; the foretaſte and firſt-fruits we have here of the future bleſſedneſs. The things that "eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man," are revealed by this Spirit: therefore doth the apoſtle pray to the Father of this glory, "that he would give them this ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation, to enlighten their underſtanding, that they might know the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints." Therefore pray earneſtly for this ſpirit, not in idle, dreaming words of courſe, but as being really apprehenſive of the neceſſity of prevailing; and give not over till thou find the ſacred fire diffuſing itſelf through thy mind and heart, to enlighten the one, and refine the other; that thy ſoul may be all turned into joy and praiſe.

Take heed of quenching the Spirit, either by your resisting or neglecting its holy dictates: He is by name and office the Comforter. The primitive Christians, it is said, walked in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Grieve not him whose business is to comfort thee.

Walk in the spirit, wait for its holy influence, and yield thyself to its guidance; so wilt thou go as the redeemed of the Lord, with everlasting joy upon thy head, till thou enter that presence, "where is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore."

Chriſtians exhorted to live leſs under the Influence of the preſent State, and more under the Power of the World to come; and to bear with Patience thoſe light Afflictions which ſhall work out for them an eternal Weight of Glory.

AN ingenuous ſon, whom his father hath employed abroad in a foreign country, though bound by duty to comply therein cheerfully with his father's will, and the neceſſity of his affairs; yet, when the father ſhall ſignify to him, that now he ſees no neceſſity for his continuing longer there, and therefore he may, if he pleaſes, return, but that he ſhall be left at liberty to follow his own inclination,—it is natural to ſuppoſe that the deſire of ſeeing a father's face would ſoon determine the choice of an affectionate ſon.

But how remote are the generality of those that profess themselves God's children from that pious ingenuity! We have taken root in the earth, and forgotten our heavenly original and alliance; we are as inhabitants here, not pilgrims, hardly persuaded to entertain with patience the thoughts of leaving our places on earth, which yet, do what we can, shall shortly know us no more.

Doth it consist with the love we owe the Author of our being, to desire always to live in the dark, and never come into his blessed presence?

Do we not know, that while we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord? Should we not, therefore, be willing rather to be present with the Lord, and be absent from the body? should we not put on a holy fortitude, that might carry us through the grave to him?

Is our love to God so faint and weak, that it dares not encounter

death, nor venture upon the imaginary terrors of the grave? how unsuitable is this to the character which is given of a saint's love! and how expressly are we told, "that he who loves his own life better than Christ, cannot be his disciple." If our love to God be not supreme, it is not such as can denominate us lovers of him. Can this be our character while we love this base earth better than him? are we not his devoted ones? have we not surrendered ourselves to him? Can we be his and not our own? or pretend ourselves dedicated to his holy pleasure, and yet be at our own disposal, and so dispose of ourselves, as that we may be most ungrateful to him, and most incapable of converse with him? How doth this love of a perishing life, and a little animated clay, stop all the effusions of the love of God, suspend its sweet and pleasant fruits, which should be always exerting themselves towards him! Where is

heir love, obedience, joy, and praiſe, who are, through the fear of death, ll their lives ſubject to bondage?

Conſider, doth it not better become hee to be grateful, than repine that God will one day unbind thy ſoul and et thee free; knock off thy fetters nd deliver thee from the houſe of ondage? Couldeſt thou deliberate- y wiſh to be doomed to this earth or ever? Remember it is thy Father hat diſpoſes of thee: how unworthy s it to diſtruſt his love! What child would be afraid to compoſe itſelf to leep in the parent's boſom?

Did we hear of a country in this world, where we might live in con- inual felicity, without ſickneſs, grief, or fear, who would not wiſh o be there, though the paſſage were roubleſome!

Have we not heard enough of heaven to allure us thither? Are God's own reports of the future glory unworthy our belief or regard?

How many, upon the credit of

his word, are now gone already triumphantly into glory, that only seeing the promises afar off, were perswaded of them, and embraced them and confessed themselves pilgrims on earth, longing to be at home in their heavenly country!

We are not the first that are to open heaven; the main body of saints is already there; how should we long to be associated to that glorious assembly!

Christians, the thing you expect is sure: you have not to do with one who is inconstant, or likely to change.

And since we live in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, and who, we know, is faithful, hath promised, we may be confident; and this confidence should quiet our hearts.

What a faithful friend keeps for us, we reckon as safe in his hands as in our own.

Yea, and amidst the many troubles

f this ſhort time of expectation, nany preſent comforts are inter-nixed: heaven is open to us: we ave conſtant liberty of acceſs to God: he diſdains not our preſent onverſe; we may have the con-tant pleaſure of the exerciſe of race, the heavenly delights of me-itation, the joy of the public ſo-emnities of worſhip, the light of hat countenance of which we ex-pect the eternal viſion, the comforts f the Holy Ghoſt, the continual roſpect of glory all the way thither. What cauſe have we of impatience r complaint?

We are not to expect the future tate of bleſſedneſs in a ſtate of pre-nt eaſe and reſt; in a quiet friendly orld; in a calm and peaceful re-ion. When the world is once for-aken by us, it grows angry; if we vow ourſelves not to be of it, ſet urſelves ſeriouſly to mind things bove it, and diſcover ourſelves to e of them that are called out of it,

from the same principle that it love its own it will hate us. When once God calls us his sons, the world will not know us.

But let us remember, these sufferings are from men, but this glory is from God.

Our sufferings here reach no farther than the bone and flesh; but this glory reaches to and transforms the soul. How little can a clod of earth suffice, in comparison of what an immortal spirit may enjoy!

The present state of suffering saints is not a state of total misery; there are rays of glory mingled with their present affliction, but there will be nothing of affliction mingled with their future glory.

And will it not transport us to consider that these sufferings are but temporary, nay, but momentary, this glory eternal. What heart is big enough to comprehend the full sense of these words: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more ex

ceeding and eternal weight of glory." How might I dwell upon every syllable! light affliction! weighty glory! exceeding weight! affliction for a moment! eternal weight of glory!

Did not our great Redeemer and Lord suffer first, and then enter into glory? and shall we resent it if God follows the same method with us? Heaven is a poor heaven if it is not worth suffering for. It is high time to give up our Christian profession, if we do not really think that its hopes and rewards exceed its reproach and trouble, or think its cross more weighty than its crown. Is the price and worth of eternal glory fallen? It hath been counted worth suffering for; and there have been those that would not accept deliverance, that they might obtain the better resurrection.

Are we grown wiser? or would we wish God to turn the tables, and assign us our good things here, and hereafter evil things? Ungrateful souls!

O how tender are we grown, in comparison of the hardiness and magnanimity of primitive Christians! we have not the patience to think of what they had the patience to endure.

We must know that it is inserted in our religion, that he cannot be a Christian that doth not deny himself, and take up the cross.

Have we a discharge, to shew a manumission from all the suffering part of a Christian's duty? do we disown the noble society of them that through faith and patience inherit the promises? Surely we are highly conceited of ourselves, if we think we are too good to be numbered among those of whom the world was not worthy.

Is eternity, with us, an empty sound, and the future blessedness of saints an airy thing, that we should reckon it insufficient to counterpoise the sufferings of a few hasty days, that will so soon have an end?

It is a ſad ſymptom of the declining ſtate of religion, when the powers of the world to come are ſo over-maſtered by the powers of this preſent world, and objects of ſenſe ſo much outweigh thoſe of faith! And is not this apparently the caſe with the Chriſtians of the preſent age? Are not our thoughts like theirs, who meditated nothing but ſitting on the right and left hand of Chriſt in an earthly dominion, while they never dreamt of drinking of his cup, or being baptized with his baptiſm?

Should God call us forth to be his champions and witneſſes, and lay down our lives in his cauſe, the call of his Providence ſhould be as the ſound of the trumpet to a truly martial ſpirit; it ſhould fill our ſouls with a joyful courage, and be complied with cheerfully, and counted all joy. "Whether we live, we muſt live to the Lord; or die, we muſt die to him." It is the glory of a Chriſtian

to live ſo much above the world, that nothing in it may make him either fond of life or weary of it.

You that name yourſelves by that worthy name of Chriſtian, that profeſs the religion taught by him that was not of the earth, earthly, but the Lord from heaven; you that are partakers of the heavenly calling; conſider the great Apoſtle and High Prieſt of your profeſſion, who took our fleſh, that we might partake of his Spirit; bore our earthly, that we might bear his heavenly image; deſcended, that he might cauſe us to aſcend. Seriouſly think of the ſcope and end of his apoſtleſhip and prieſthood. He was ſent out from God to invite and conduct you to him; to bring you into the communion of his glory and bleſſedneſs. He came upon a meſſage and treaty of peace, to diſcover his Father's love, and win your's; to let you know what kind thoughts the God of love had conceived towards you; to ſettle a

friendſhip, and to admit you to the participation of his eternal glory. Yea, he came to ſhew to the world, in his own perſon, how much of heaven he could make to dwell in mortal fleſh; how glorioufly the divine life could triumph over all the infirmities of frail humanity; and ſo leave men a certain proof and pledge to what perfection human nature ſhould be improved by his grace and ſpirit in all them that ſhould reſign themſelves to his conduct, and follow his ſteps; that heaven and earth were not ſo far aſunder but that he knew how to ſettle an intercourſe between them; that an heavenly life was poſſible to be tranſacted here, and certain to be glorioufly rewarded and perfected hereafter.

And having teſtified theſe things, he ſeals the teſtimony, and opens the way for the accompliſhment of all, by his death.

Your heavenly Apoſtle becomes a prieſt and a ſacrifice at once, that no

doubt might remain among men of his ſincerity, of what, even dying, he ceaſed not to profeſs and avow; and that by his own propitiatory blood a mutual reconciliation might be wrought between God and you; that your hearts might be won to him, and poſſeſſed with an ingenuous ſhame of your ever having been his enemies; and that his diſpleaſure might for ever ceaſe towards you, and be turned into everlaſting friendſhip and love; that eternal redemption being obtained, heaven might be opened to you, and you finally be received to the glory of God; your hearts being bent thitherward, and made willing to run through all the difficulties of life or death to attain it.

Do not think that Chriſt came into the world, and died, to procure the pardon of your ſins, and ſo tranſlate you to heaven, while your hearts ſtill cleave to the earth; he came, and returned, to prepare a way for you, and then call, not drag you thi-

ner; that, by his precepts, promiſes, example, and ſpirit, he might form and faſhion your ſouls to that glorious ſtate, and make you willing to abandon all things for it. And lo! how the God of all grace is calling you, by Jeſus Chriſt, unto his eternal glory! Direct then your eyes and hearts to that mark, the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.

It is your calling to forſake this world, and mind the other; make haſte then to quit yourſelves of all earthly diſpoſitions and affections; learn to live in this world as thoſe that are not of it, that expect every day, and wiſh to leave it; whoſe hearts are gone already.

It is dreadful to die with pain and regret; to be forced out of the body; to die a violent death, and go away with an unwilling, reluctant heart!

O get then the lovely image of the future glory into your minds! make it familiar to your thoughts! imprint daily there theſe words: "I ſhall

behold thy face; I ſhall be ſatisfied with thy likeneſs."

See that your ſouls are enriched with that righteouſneſs; have inwrought into them that holy rectitude that may diſpoſe them to that bleſſed ſtate.

Then will you die with your own conſent, and go away, not driven, but allured and drawn; you will go, as the redeemed of the Lord, with everlaſting joy upon their heads; as thoſe that know whither you go, even to a ſtate infinitely worthy of your deſire and choice, and where it is beſt for you to be.

You will part with your ſouls, not by a forcible ſeparation, but a joyful ſurrender and reſignation; they will diſlodge from this earthly tabernacle, rather as putting it off, than having it rent and torn away.

Looſen yourſelves from this body by degrees, as we do any thing we would remove from a place where it ſticks faſt. Gather up your ſpirits into themſelves, teach them to look

upon themſelves as a diſtinct thing.

Inure them to the thoughts of a diſſolution. Let your hearts, which are ſaid to die laſt, die firſt. Prevent death, and be mortified towards every earthly thing beforehand, that death may have nothing to kill but your body; and that you may not die a double death in one hour, and ſuffer the death of your body, and of your love to it, both at once.

Shake off your bands and fetters, the terrene affections that ſo cloſely confine you to the houſe of your bondage, and lift up your heads in expectation of the approaching jubilee, the day of your redemption; when you are to go out free, and enter into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God; when you ſhall ſerve, and groan, and complain no longer.

Let it be your continual ſong, and the matter of your daily praiſe, that the time of your happy deliverance is haſtening on; that ere long you ſhall be abſent from the body and pre-

ſent with the Lord! That he hath not doomed you to an everlaſting impriſonment within theſe cloſe and fleſhly walls, wherein you have been ſo long ſhut up from beholding his ſight and glory.

In the thoughts of this, while the outward man is ſenſibly periſhing, let the inward man revive, and be renewed day by day.

Rejoice that it is the gracious pleaſure of thy good God, that thou ſhouldeſt not always be amidſt impure and diſconſolate darkneſs; that he will ſhortly change thy filthy garments for thoſe of ſalvation and praiſe! The end approaches! As you turn over theſe leaves, ſo are your days turned over; and as you are now arrived at the end of this book, God will ſhortly write *finis* to the book of your life on earth, and ſhew you your names written in heaven, in the book of that life which ſhall never end.

DELIGHTING IN GOD:

EXTRACTED FROM

A DISCOURSE

OF

MR. HOWE.

CONTENTS.

Pſalm xxxvii 4.
Delight thyſelf alſo in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the deſire of thine heart. Page 1

CHAP. I.
The ſoul rejoicing in its renewed temper of mind towards the bleſſed God. - 4

CHAP. II.
The renewed ſoul rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus, as the way to the Father. - 8

CHAP. III.
The renewed ſoul rejoicing in its love towards men. - - 11

CHAP. IV.
The ſoul rejoicing in its own renewed temper. - - 14

CHAP. V.
The delight and joy ariſing from a renewed temper of mind towards the heavenly world. - - 21

CHAP. VI.

The Christian earnestly exhorted to enter into the life and power of religion. 25

CHAP. VII.

The soul who delights not in God, exhorted to consider its own sin and misery. 30

CHAP. VIII.

A serious Address to the lukewarm Christian. - - 35

CHAP. IX.

The Christian directed in seeking that happiness which is only to be found in God. 40

CHAP. X.

The Christian's want of comfort in religion attributed to his neglect of God. 49

CHAP. XI.

The Christian earnestly exhorted to aim at the higher strains of devotion. 55

DELIGHTING IN GOD.

Pſalm xxxvii. 4.

Delight thyſelf alſo in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the deſire of thine heart.

MAY we not ſuppoſe the text ſpeaking to us in language like this: Thy only true delight is to be found in a courſe of religion; it is not to be expected from the world, or from a courſe of ſin, but in exerciſing thyſelf unto godlineſs, in mortifying the fleſh with its affections and luſts, in denying thyſelf, in dying to the world, in living to God, in giving up thyſelf to the ſeveral exerciſes of an holy life, watching,

praying, and meditating; in truſting in the Lord with all thy heart, and in doing all the good thou canſt in thy place and ſtation, letting thy light ſo ſhine before men, that they ſeeing thy good works may glorify thy Father who is in heaven; in contentment with what thou enjoyeſt, and patience with what thou ſuffereſt; in doing juſtice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with thy God.

In theſe exerciſes thou wilt find a divine delight which the world knows not of; it will ſpread itſelf through the whole of thy religion, and create a heaven within! but it is the renewed ſoul alone that can taſte of theſe joys, an heart formed according to the revelation of God in Chriſt, and caſt into the mould of the goſpel.

Surely that muſt be a bleſſed and delightful ſtate, wherein a wretched ſoul that was loſt in the impurities of ſin, ſhall be ſtripped of its depravity, perverſe inclinations and corrupt

affections, which the Goſpel of Chriſt condemns, and inveſted with that purity, that gracious and holy frame which the Goſpel recommends. To ſuch a ſoul it muſt be delightful, to feel itſelf in part rectified, and to expect to be further renewed in its temper and inclinations towards the bleſſed God, and his beloved Son Jeſus Chriſt; towards men and towards themſelves, created anew in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and true holineſs; to have a heart made ſound in God's ſtatutes, to have a ſpirit of love, power, and a ſound mind,—ſo pleaſant that it occaſions a triumph even when the outward man is periſhing, if the inward man is thus renewed day by day.

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affections, which the Gospel of Christ condemns, and invested with that purity, that gracious and holy frame which the Gospel recommends. To such a soul it must be delightful, to feel itself in part rectified, and to expect to be further renewed in its temper and inclinations towards the blessed God, and his beloved Son Jesus Christ; towards men and towards themselves, created anew in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; to have a heart made sound in God's statutes, to have a spirit of love, power, and a sound mind,—so pleasant that it occasions a triumph even when the outward man is perishing, if the inward man is thus renewed day by day.

CHAP. I.

The ſoul rejoicing in its renewed temper of mind towards the bleſſed God.

THE renewed ſoul upon reflection finds, that it was dead towards God, without motion or inclination towards him; all its powers bent quite another way; alienated from the life of God, and living as without him in the world: but its delight now is to bring back what was once alienated from its God: its language is—Lo I come to thee, thou art the Lord my God, I have brought thee back thine own, the heart which was gone aſtray, that had been ſo long a ſtranger to thy bleſſed preſence and communion with thee; take now the ſoul which thou haſt made; poſſeſs thy own right, ſtamp it with the impreſſion of thine own ſeal, and mark it for thyſelf; other Lords

ſhall no more have dominion; I will now make mention of thy name, and of thine only; I bind myſelf to thee in everlaſting bonds, in a covenant never to be forgotten.

How delightful is it to live in a continued communion with God, agreeable to the tenor of this covenant; to be a friend of God, an aſſociate of the moſt high, no more a ſtranger, a foreigner, but of his own houſehold: to live upon the plentiful proviſion and under the happy government of his family; to have a heart to ſeek all from him, and lay out all for him! how great is the pleaſure of truſt, of living free from care of any thing but how to pleaſe God in a cheerful dependance ting from him our ving that our ſoul that while they hunger after righteouſneſs they filled. And for the body, not to doubt but he that feeds ravens and clothes lilies will feed and clothe them. To be

ſo taken up in ſeeking his kingdom and righteouſneſs, as to leave it to him to add the other things as he ſees fit; to take no thought for to-morrow; to have a firm repoſe on the goodneſs of Providence, and its ſure and never-erring wiſdom; a ſteady perſuaſion that our Heavenly Father knows what we have need of, and what it is fitteſt for us to want, to ſuffer, or enjoy; how delightful is this ſort of life, how agreeable to one born of God, joint heirs with Chriſt, and claiming that large grant that ſays, All things are yours!

To live in the fear of God is not without it[illegible] it compoſes the for[illegible]nity that is not wi[illegible]hecks unruly paſ[illegible] within in a ple[illegible]

To [illegible]e is delight itſelf; to be in a temper of ſoul as to reſolve, him will I ſeek and purſue, him will I ſtudy to pleaſe and ſerve, and my whole ſtrength and life ſhall

be devoted to his ſervice here, and in fitting myſelf for the everlaſting enjoyment of him in heaven.

To live in a ſtated habitual ſubjection to him as the Lord of our lives. How pleaſant is it to have learned to obey; to be accuſtomed to the yoke; to be by the law of the Spirit of life made free from the law of ſin and death; to be able to ſay, as the undiſguiſed ſentiments of our hearts, becauſe thy law is holy, therefore thy ſervant loveth it; thy law is in my heart, I delight to do thy will, O God!

The continual exerciſe of a good conſcience towards God hath great pleaſure in it. How ſweet are the reflections of a well inſtructed conſcience! when our hearts reproach us not, and we reſolve they ſhall not as long as we live; conſcious to ourſelves of no baſe deſign, propoſe nothing to ourſelves that may cauſe us to ſhun the eye of our God; can implore him as an aſſiſtant, and

appeal to him as a judge; is this without pleasure? this is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. Thus to converse with God, whom we daily design to glorify and serve, and whom we hope finally to enjoy, is certainly a way of pleasantness and peace.

CHAP. II.

The renewed soul rejoicing in Christ Jesus, as the way to the Father.

THIS great Lord and Prince of life and peace came down from heaven on purpose to be the restorer of souls, to repair the desolations and ruins of many generations: he came full of grace and truth—the bright-

neſs of the Father's glory—the expreſs image of his perſon—the heir of all things; he whoſe name is Wonderful, — Counſellor, — the Mighty God,—the Everlaſting Father,—the Prince of Peace! it is he to whom all power is given both in heaven and earth, that he might give eternal life to as many as were given him: it is he who ſpoiled principalities and powers, and made a ſhew of them openly; he who humbled himſelf, made himſelf of no reputation, took on him the form of a ſervant, became obedient unto death: him whom the Father hath highly exalted, and given him a name above every name, that at his name every knee ſhould bow; and of whom he ſaid, "Let all the angels of God worſhip him;" ſuch is our Almighty Saviour: he beheld the deſolation and ruin brought into this world; ſin univerſally reigning, and death ſpreading its dark ſhadow over all the earth; the prince of

darkneſs drawing men off from the bleſſed God, their life and happineſs, ruling and leading them captive at his will: moved with compaſſion, and drawn by pity and love, he came to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt: he came full of grace and truth to bleſs men, in turning them from darkneſs unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Who would not with joy receive this compaſſionate lover of ſouls, this Prince of Peace? His kingdom is righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; his yoke is eaſy, and his burden is light: how delightful to receive him as our Lord,—when the ſoul that once ſaid within itſelf, I will not have him to reign over me, is brought freely to yield, and with ſincere affection devotes itſelf to him, ſubmits to his yoke, conſents to his government, and with full conſent ſays to him—thou Lord, who haſt ſo often drawn me by the cords of love, who wouldeſt rule

only that thou mayeſt ſave, accept now a ſelf-reſigning ſoul: I make a free ſurrender of myſelf; I bow and ſubmit to thy ſovereign power; I fall at the footſtool of thy throne. Thou Prince of the kings of the earth, who haſt loved ſinners and waſhed them from their ſins in thy own blood, glory in thy conqueſts, thou haſt overcome: I will from henceforth be no longer mine own, but thine; I am ready to receive thy commands, to do thy will, to ſacrifice my all to thy name and honour, my whole life and being are for ever thine.

CHAP. III.

The renewed ſoul rejoicing in its love towards men.

THE fruit of the Spirit is peace, long ſuffering, gentleneſs, meekneſs, righteouſneſs, and truth. Now

hath not that ſoul a ſpring of pleaſure within itſelf, that is in theſe reſpects as God would have it to be; that is conſcious to itſelf of nothing but righteouſneſs, goodneſs, benignity, and candour towards man, and is in all things actuated by a ſpirit of love, that ſuffereth long and is kind, that envieth not, that vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up, doth not behave itſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not its own, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth? The univerſal law of love wrought deep into the heart, being filled with all goodneſs, righteouſneſs, meekneſs, mercifulneſs; is apt to do no wrong, to pity and help the diſtreſſed, to love enemies, and, as there is opportunity, to do good unto all, eſpecially to them that are of the houſehold of faith. Such are the happy effects of this

renewing change upon the ſoul, that it acts ſuitably towards all men, takes pleaſure in the beſt, in the ſaints and excellent ones of the earth, in whom is his delight; and is no more diſaffected even to the very worſt, than to wiſh them better; neither envies the greateſt, nor deſpiſes the meaneſt; neither is revengeful towards them that injure him, nor unthankful to them that oblige; he is apt to learn of good men, and to teach the bad, by obſerving and giving the moſt imitable example; he is not undutiful to ſuperiors, nor moroſe and unconverſable towards equals; he lives not to himſelf; is a common good to all within the ſphere through which his activity can extend itſelf; he doth good with inclination, from the ſteady propenſity of his own will, and an implanted principle of goodneſs. It is evident, God hath formed ſuch a man's ſpirit into delight of the pureſt kind, and the beſt ſort of pleaſure. "God is love, and

he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

CHAP. IV.

The ſoul rejoicing in its own renewed temper.

THE unrenewed ſoul is an enemy to himſelf, he breaks the order which God and nature hath eſtabliſhed, dethrones his own reaſon and judgment, which ought to bear ſway and govern within him; he ſees what he ought to ſeek and do, but runs quite another courſe. What ſtorms does this raiſe in his boſom? What torture is it when a man's own light and knowledge bear witneſs againſt him and hold him under a continual doom? How cruel are men to themſelves in their ſelf-indulgence, gratifying their own ſenſual inclinations, with the greateſt danger to their ſouls; when they

care not at what expence they make proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof? What unkind uſage is it to themſelves when they cheriſh deſires which they cannot gratify, and raiſe to themſelves expectations of things not within their own power; when they exerciſe no authority and dominion, but enſlave themſelves to vile and ignominious luſts and paſſions, more cruel than the taſkmaſters of Egypt. But when a divine change paſſes upon the ſoul, it ſets all things right within; where there was nothing but darkneſs, diſorder, and confuſion, there now ſhines a mild and pleaſant light; regularity, purity, and peace reign within. How happy is it when that idol, ſelf, is no longer maintained within us, at the expence of our peace, comfort, ſafety and eternal hope! an idol that engroſſed the whole of our ſouls, that exhauſted the ſtrength and vigor of our ſpirits, conſumed our time, and kept all our

powers and faculties in a continual exercise and hurry, to make a costly, vain, and unlawful provision for it! How great is the ease and pleasure which we feel in being delivered from that soul-wasting monster! What a jubilee doth it make, what songs of triumph and praise doth it furnish to the poor soul now delivered and redeemed from death and bondage! How much more easy and reasonable a service is it to study to please God than ourselves; when we feel ourselves dead to our former lord and his service, and only alive to God through Jesus Christ! When sin no longer reigns in our mortal bodies that we should obey it in the lusts thereof; when we no more yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead. What an ease is it to the spirit of a man, when he hath not himself to seek and serve, and care for in any unlawful way;

when he perceives himſelf counterpoiſed by a prevailing better principle, and the weight and bias of his own ſpirit inclines him quite another way; when he finds he hath nothing left him to do but to ſerve God, to know his will and do it: to this happy ſtate the renewed mind is gradually tending.

How great is the pleaſure ariſing from ſelf-government, when the mind is patient of reſtraint and direction, eaſily obeys the rein, and follows the dictates of an enlightened well-inſtructed mind; when order is maintained between the ſuperior faculties and the inferior, and there are no contentious murmurs of ungovernable appetites and paſſions againſt the law of the mind: it is true that where this holy rectitude takes place but in part, there will be many conflicts, but thoſe conflicts are in order to victory; and how joyful and glorious is the triumph upon that victory! when the ſoul

enters upon its thankſgiving ſong, I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord! How happy is that ſtate which is ſometimes attained here when there are no tumults within. The wicked are as a troubled ſea that cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt; no governing principle, no ſceptre, no trident, to check and allay the rage of thoſe waters. But when his power goes forth in the ſoul, whoſe very word the wind and ſeas obey, how pleaſant and peaceful is the calm! Now the man is reſtored to himſelf, and is again in his right mind; he is truly ſaid to enjoy himſelf and upon the beſt terms, he enjoys himſelf in his God: he reſtoreth my ſoul, and leadeth me in the paths of righteouſneſs for his name's ſake.

How great is the pleaſure that ariſes from a conſtant diligent ſelf-inſpection!

When the mind dwells within itſelf, reſides at home, ſeeks not itſel

abroad; remains within its own bounds, is intent upon itſelf, watches over its own motions as its proper charge; keeps the heart with all diligence, knowing that out of it are the iſſues of life. To have a mind habituated to its own buſineſs, its eye not roving, with that of the fool's, to the ends of the earth, but turned inward upon itſelf, keeping his own vineyard, while that of the ſluggard is over-run with thorns and briars. And herein conſiſts much of that divine change which renewing grace makes upon the heart; it diſpoſes it to look inward, and gives it the pleaſure which naturally ariſes from thence. How do all things flouriſh under the careful and ſelf-reflecting eye; that ſoul is as a watered garden; thither can he invite the preſence of his God; retirement and ſolitude become delightful, becauſe he finds that he is never leſs alone than when alone. The eye, tired with beholding the ſad ſcenes

that every where come in view from a world loſt in wickedneſs, can refreſh itſelf by looking into God's own plantation within; he looks not upon himſelf with an eye of pride, nor upon others with that of diſdain; he beholds with ſelf-complacency, not arrogance, what God hath wrought there; he knows that there is ſtill a ſelf, upon which he cannot look but with ſorrow and abaſement: though there be now incorporated with him a better ſelf, yet he well knows who made him to differ,—not only from others but from himſelf. And the more he is uſed to ſuch ſelf-reflection, the more pleaſant it becomes to him; and though things may ſometimes look ſad and ſometimes dubious, yet even this occaſions a more diligent ſearch, and engages to more earneſt labour and ſtrugglings with God and with himſelf. The ſincerity which appears in that ſelf-ſuſpicion and jealouſy over ourſelves, is not without its pleaſure, while we

appeal to him who knoweth all things; "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my ways; and lead me in the way everlasting."

CHAP. V.

The delight and joy arising from a renewed temper of mind towards the heavenly world.

IT is the great design of the Gospel to draw men from earth to heaven; and it is matter of delight and joy when the soul is renewed in the temper of its mind towards that heavenly world: unrenewed souls are influenced and governed only by this present evil world, the fashion whereof passeth away,—the things of the world to come have no power over them; they love this world, mind earthly things, and are not startled when they are plainly told

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that men of this character have not the love of the Father in them, and are enemies to the croſs of Chriſt.

But how delightful a change is made by renewing grace; when the mind is diſentangled from the ſnares which bound him to this earth, and feels himſelf aſcending and moving upwards out of that darkneſs, ſtupidity, and death, that poſſeſſed his ſoul, into that upper region of light, purity, and peace, toward which he is daily tending in the temper of his mind; when heaven, in reſpect of the pure holineſs, the calm ſerenity, the reſt and bleſſedneſs of it, is now grown familar to him, and his very element! how pleaſant to live in this world as a pilgrim and ſtranger, ſeeking ſtill the better, the heavenly country! to behold the allurements of the world without inclination towards them, and the moſt alarming appearances without commotion, while in the midſt of the world, to dwell apart from it, in the ſecret

the Almighty, under his pavilion, withdrawn from the communion of the world and enjoying communion with heaven; to have a heart made ſound in God's ſtatutes, and to flouriſh as cedars of Lebanon under the beams of the Sun of Righteouſneſs; to be ſtrengthened with all might in the inner man, and having clean hands, to grow ſtronger and ſtronger; by waiting on the Lord to renew our ſtrength; to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint. Heaven is the prize of our high calling; for this the apoſtle Paul earneſtly panted, and was willing even to endure the croſs itſelf, if by any means he might attain to a happy reſurrection and an union with a riſen Jeſus. For this the primitive Chriſtians took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods, knowing in themſelves that they had in heaven a far better and an enduring ſubſtance; heaven ſignified much with them, and this world very little; they looked not to the

things that were ſeen and temporal, but to the things unſeen and eternal; like thoſe ancient worthies, who by faith lived as pilgrims and ſtrangers on earth, deſpiſed pleaſures, riches, and honours; endured all manner of hardſhips and tortures, not accepting deliverance, becauſe they were taken up in the purſuit of the better country, had reſpect unto the recompence of reward, and expected a part in the better reſurrection.

"Wherefore ſeeing we alſo are encompaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us; looking unto Jeſus, the author and finiſher of our faith; who for the joy that was ſet before him endured the croſs, deſpiſed the ſhame, and ſat down at the right hand of God."

CHAP. VI.

The Chriſtian earneſtly exhorted to enter into the life and power of religion.

"THOU ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf." How conciſe and clear a recapitulation of our duty have we in theſe words of our Saviour to a renewed mind; how comprehenſive and delightful will theſe duties appear; nor would ſuch an one part with the ſubſtantial fulneſs of theſe words for the treaſures of the Indies! How truly is it called that good, that acceptable, and perfect will of God, and how fitly to be preferred before thouſands of gold and of ſilver.

It was no doubt with high reliſh and pleaſure that the Pſalmiſt uttered

his acknowledgments of the Divine Goodneſs; " he reſtoreth my ſoul, he leadeth me in the paths of righteouſneſs for his name's ſake." The paths of righteouſneſs are agreeable and pleaſant to renewed ſouls; it will be pleaſant to them to know the will of God, and to meditate in his law day and night; they will eſteem the words of his mouth as their appointed food, and it will be as their meat and drink to do his will.

We can eaſily perceive how tireſome and painful any thing of buſineſs and labour is to a perſon that languiſhes under ſome enfeebling diſeaſe; ſo are ſpiritual exerciſes to the ſoul that is lifeleſs, indiſpoſed, to every good work reprobate; how will the heart recoil and give back, as if one were urging it upon flames or the ſword's point. The carnal mind is enmity againſt God, and is not ſubject to his law, neither indeed can be; but when once the law of God is within the heart, it will

delight to do his will: it cannot be delightful to act against inclination; a mere imitation of goodness, while the vital principle is wanting, can no more be pleasing to man than to God, whom you cannot mock with the most specious disguises. Is this a wise provision for eternity? a few empty notions! the motion of the tongue! the gratification of the ear! the bowing of the knee! Are these all that thou designest or wilt mind to do for thy soul? Will these supply the place of living religion, serve thee instead of inward acquaintance with God, and of being really and habitually devoted to him? Hast thou no desire to know what is in itself so delightful? How sluggish a temper doth it argue not to wish to know what the pleasures of religion are! It were even a laudable curiosity to resolve upon making a trial, to get into the inmost centre of it, to pierce and press onward till you reach the seat of bliss. Did you ne-

ver try experiments for your pleasure; try this one; see what you will find in withdrawing yourself from all things else, and becoming entirely devoted to God through the Redeemer, to live after his will and in his presence. Try the difference between viewing truths to please your genius, or using divine ordinances to keep up the custom, to conform yourself to those you live among, and help to make a solemn shew,—and doing these things with a serious design to get into an acquaintance with God, to have your soul transformed into his image, that you may have present and eternal fellowship with him. How much better is it to have your lives governed by an awful and dutiful respect to God, than to follow your own wild and ungoverned inclination; and whether it is not better, what good things soever you do, to do it for the Lord's sake, than from base and sordid motives. Why should

you content yourſelf to remain at the door, and in the outer courts of religion, when others enter in and taſte the rich proviſions of God's houſe? Why will you ſuffer others to enter into the kingdom of God before you, even that kingdom which conſiſts in righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt?

Will you dream and ſlumber all your days? How much time have you loſt, that might have been pleaſantly ſpent in a courſe of godlineſs? Do you not aim at a life of eternal delight with God? If you now begin not to live to God, when will you? - That life which you reckon ſhall never end with you, muſt have a beginning. Will you defer till you die your beginning to live? Have you any hope that God will deal in a peculiar way with you from all men, and make the other world the place of your firſt heart change? How diſmal would it be to you to look within and find your heart dead

towards God, and the things of God, and that you have no delight in them; think what the beginnings of the divine life, and the preſent delights of it, muſt be the earneſt of to you, and make ſure the ground of ſo great an hope.

CHAP. VII.

The ſoul who delights not in God exhorted to conſider its own ſin and miſery.

OF the hypocrite it is ſaid, "Will he delight himſelf in the Almighty? Will he at all times call upon God? No, God is not in all his thoughts." Are not the people that ſhall be turned into hell deſcribed thus, "the people that forget God?" Is not love to God the firſt and great commandment? No to delight in God therefore, what can it be but the very height of

bellion? What will thy ſobriety, thy juſtice, thy charity, ſignify, if thou haſt theſe to glory in, while thou art habitually diſaffected to thy God? Let men value thee to whom thou ſheweſt ſome reſpect by theſe virtues; but expect not the favour of him to whom thou payeſt no regard: doſt thou not tremble when thou findeſt this to be thy caſe? I can delight in creatures, but not in God, can take pleaſure in my friend, but none in him? Art thou content that this ſhould be written on thy forehead, and proclaimed to all the world, that thou art a lover of pleaſure more than a lover of God? Art thou unwilling that the world ſhould know the true ſenſe of thy heart? How then canſt thou hold up thy head before that eye that is as a flame of fire, that ſearches thy heart and tries thy reins? Wilt thou ſtand before the glorious Majeſty of heaven and earth, who knows thy diſaffected heart, and ſay it is but a ſmall tranſ-

greſſion thou haſt been guilty of, in not loving him and making him thy delight and joy? How unnatural it is to forget the bountiful Author of thy life and being; what cauſe canſt thou pretend of diſaffection towards him? Many good works hath he done for thee; for which of theſe doſt thou hate him? Wherein hath he diſobliged thee? With what ſweet and gentle allurements hath he ſought to win thy heart; and is it not unnatural that thy ſpirit ſhould be ſo averſe to him, who is pleaſed to ſtyle himſelf the Father of ſpirits? Thou cutteſt thyſelf off from him who is thy life, and art laying a train for the blowing up of thy eternal hopes. All that hate him love death.

The God, whom you forget, is not abſent from you; have you not daily before your eyes enough to bring him to your mind, while his glorious works ſurround you, and you live, move, and have your being in him? He daily offers himſelf to

your acquaintance, would have you know him, and walk with him, but you like not to retain him in your knowledge; he offers himself to your view, but you take no notice of him; he meets you at every turn, and aims to draw your eye, but cannot gain a look; he passes by you, and you perceive him not; he compasses you about behind and before, and is acquainted with all your ways, but with him and his ways you will have no acquaintance, alienated from the life of God, and without him in the world: yet you are not willing to be thought a hater of God, though you converse not with him as a friend; you cannot pronounce yourself his enemy, but, consider, what are you but an enemy while your hearts are disaffected towards him. Do you prove yourselves his friends by keeping his commandments? Do you not disobey the known will of God in your ordinary practice without regret? Do you not know it to be

his will that you ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; that you ſeek firſt the kingdom of heaven; that you keep your heart with all diligence; that you deny yourſelf, crucify the fleſh, be temperate, juſt, merciful, patient? Do you aim at obeying him in theſe things? Can you ſay, Lord, for thy ſake I refrain from the things to which my heart inclines? Do you not allow yourſelf to be licentious, earthly, vain, proud, wrathful, revengeful, though you know it will offend him? How can you then be a friend of God? Conſider the ſolemn judgment of the great day is approaching; will thy heart endure, or thy hands be ſtrong when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be open, and thou ſhalt ſtand convicted before his tribunal, in the ſight of angels and men, of having borne all thy days a diſaffected heart towards thy Sovereign Lord, whom thou waſt ſo many ways obliged to love and ſerve? Surely thou wilt not then ſay, thy tranſgreſſion was ſmall.

CHAP. VIII.

A ſerious Addreſs to the lukewarm Chriſtian.

NEVERtheleſs I have ſomething againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love." Does not affect your heart to hear that your Lord and Redeemer hath ſomething againſt you; ſomething laid up, kept on record, that he bears on his mind, and hath lying on his heart againſt you? Does it not wound your heart to hear him ſaying to you, I remember the kindneſs of thy youth, the love of thine eſpouſals; and now, ſince thoſe former days, what iniquity haſt thou found in me, that thou art gone far from me, and haſt walked after vanity, and art become vain? "O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? teſtify againſt me.

Make a ſtand and bethink your-
ſelves; can you juſtify your con-
duct towards him whom you take to
be your God? Was this all that you
obliged yourſelves to in the day of
your ſolemn covenant with him
only to take on you the name of
relation to him, and then take leave
till you meet him again in the other
world; and that, in the mean time
this preſent world, or your carnal
ſelf, ſhould really be your God, and
he only bear the name? Think what
wrong you have done him whom
you have taken for the God of your
life, to whom you vowed your heart
and ſoul. God has not been in all
your thoughts; and to this may be
attributed the declining ſtate of reli-
gion in your ſoul; the eaſy victory
that temptation hath over you, your
want of courage, reſolution, and zeal
for God; your ſluggiſhneſs in the
courſe of well doing; the weariness
you experience in religious duties;
the difficulty you find to truſt in

God; and your continual bondage from the fear of death.

If you delighted much in God, would you not be preſſing hard after him? Would you not be following on to know him? And then would his goings forth be prepared before you as the morning, and he would be ſtill viſiting you with freſh and increaſing light; your pleaſure would be renewed and increaſed by every freſh view, and your progreſs would be from ſight to ſight, and from pleaſure to pleaſure; whereas now this wheel ſtands ſtill, or you are going back into darkneſs and deſolation! If you delighted more in God, would not your thought of him be more deeply ſerious, more highly raiſed? Would not theſe thoughts (once become precious) be alſo numerous as the ſands of the ſea ſhore? Would not your earthly temper, your ſtrangeneſs and averſeneſs to him, vaniſh and wear off, if you were more exerciſed in actual delightful

converſe with him? How juſtly may all this be imputed to your not applying yourſelves to more frequent actual delight in God. You find your ſpirit ſinking into carnality, an earthly temper of mind gradually ſeizing on you; worldly thoughts, cares, deſires, and fears invading your heart; by the ſame degrees that theſe come on, life retires. You keep up the form of praying and doing other duties, but you languiſh in them. Can you be content to lie ſtill and die, and rather chooſe to ſuffer the pains of death than of labour, by which your ſoul might yet live?

If you yield to a ſlothful ſluggiſh temper of mind, you will ſoon have nothing remaining of your religion but the dead and empty form; how waſte and deſolate a thing will it then be, when the ſame duties, the ſame external frame, and acts of worſhip remain, but the ſpirit of life and power which once breathed in them

is retired and gone; and will you take up with that deluſive ſhadow, or be content to embrace the ſtiff and breathleſs carcaſe that remains?

Think what time you have loſt from pleaſant, delightful walking with God; what damage you have done yourſelves; how far you might have attained; how far behind you are in your preparation for a bleſſed eternity; what wrong you have done him whom you have choſen for the God of your life. Return to him with weeping and ſupplication; pour out your ſouls before him; endeavour to awaken in yourſelves ſome ſenſe of your condition; think—from whence am I fallen? whither am I going? what if God, who is my life, ſhould depart from me for ever? Is this a time to roll myſelf upon a bed of ſloth, and ſay, Soul, take thine eaſe; while I am even upon the brink of the pit? But, amidſt all your fear, exclude not hope; there is balm in Gilead and

a phyſician there; one, in whoſe hands none that truſted ever miſcarried; ſay within yourſelves, tho' I am fallen and low, I ſhall riſe and ſtand renewed by thee, O my God! O my ſoul, hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God!

CHAP. IX.

The Chriſtian directed in ſeeking that happineſs, which is only to be found in God.

ARE you now come to this point, that you will ſeek a happineſs which is only to be found in God; and, that you will deliberately and reſolvedly propoſe to yourſelves delighting in God, as the daily buſineſs of your lives? Let this new ſtate of mind begin with a ſolemn renewal of your engagements, and

devoting yourſelves to God; again take faſt hold of his covenant, and ſee that it take faſt hold of you; and while you hear this compaſſionate language, "Return, O backſliding children; for I am merciful, ſaith the Lord;" will you not reply, "Lo, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Wilt thou not revive us again that our ſouls may rejoice in thee?" And while you again take on you the bonds of this covenant, let it be done with a deep ſenſe of your aggravated guilt, and of that grace, which has left open for you a door of hope, a place for repentance;—with humility, fear, and diſtruſt of yourſelf, and dependence upon the Spirit of all grace, enter upon reſolutions for new and better obedience.

When you are thus returned into the way of duty, let it be your ſtudy and endeavour to get a temper of mind more entirely ſpiritual.

Through the great advantage that

ſenſible things have upon your ſenſes and imagination, you are in continual danger of being drawn away from God; you muſt therefore diligently watch and fortify thoſe inlets, and not give away your ſouls to ſenſe and the things of ſenſe. Your ſtate is that of conflict and warfare; ſtrictly guard all the avenues of your inward man; it is better to reſiſt there and combat your enemy, than within your walls; he is eaſier kept than driven out:—but if you will have no rule over your own ſpirit, but let it be as a city, broken down and without walls; if you will live careleſs and at eaſe, and think in this way to have delight in God, your delight will ſoon find other objects, and return like the ſwine to its wallowing in the mire, become ſenſual, impure, and at length turn all to gall and wormwood.

Endeavour that your knowledge, or the conception you have of God, may be more diſtinct and clear.

Have you not found this to be one great obſtruction to your delighting in God, that you know not how to conceive of him? It is true, we can never find out the Almighty to perfection; and it will always be but a little portion that we ſhall know of that glorious incomprehenſible Being: but ſince there is ſuch a knowledge of God, that we are required to have our ſouls furniſhed with, and whereon eternal life depends, with ſuch gracious diſpoſitions of heart towards him that are the beginnings of that life; ought it not to be our daily endeavour to acquaint ourſelves more with him?

Can you not form a notion of wiſdom, goodneſs, juſtice, holineſs, truth, power, all uniting in a Being, purely ſpiritual, infinite, and unchangeable, the Author and Original of all things?

Lift up your minds above your ſenſes and all ſenſible things; uſe

your underſtandings, whereby you are diſtinguiſhed from the brute creation: conſider this is he from whom you and all things ſprang, and in whom your life is. Converſe with the word of God; read his deſcription of himſelf; and do not content yourſelves to have the words and expreſſions before your eyes, or in your mouths, that repreſent to you his nature and attributes; but pauſe and conſider the things themſelves ſignified by them. When you read ſuch paſſages of his own holy book as that which tells you his name, that he is the Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, &c. or that he tells you, he is light, he is love, he is God only wiſe, he is the Almighty, God all ſufficient, he is All in all, and that, the heavens and heaven of heavens cannot contain him; or wherein you find him admired as glorious in holineſs; or that ſay, he is what he is, that he is the Firſt and the Laſt, the Alpha and

Omega, &c. endeavour to fix the true meaning of ſuch expreſſions deep in your mind, that you may have an entire and well-formed repreſentation of him before you, to which you may upon all occaſions have recourſe, and not be at a loſs every time you are to apply yourſelves to converſe with him, in what way to conceive of him.

And becauſe mere words, though they may furniſh you with a more full and comprehenſive notion of him, yet it may not be with ſo lively a one, or that you find them ſo powerfully ſtriking your heart, compare with the account his word gives you of him, the works which your eyes may daily behold, and which you are aſſured are wrought and done by him.

To read or hear of his wiſdom, power, goodneſs, and then to have the viſible effects within your conſtant view, how mighty a confirmation doth this carry with it? You

may behold ſomething of him in every creature. All his works not only repreſent, but even praiſe and commend him to you.

Accuſtom yourſelves to behold him in the face of his beloved Son, the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon: was it not his errand and buſineſs into the world, to declare the Father? And hath not he, who at ſundry times and in divers manners ſpake in times paſt unto the fathers by the prophets, in theſe laſt days ſpoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the worlds. He was, on earth, the viſible repreſentation of God to men; the Divine Glory ſhone in him; the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Suppoſe then we had ſeen Chriſt in the fleſh, and been the conſtant obſervers of his whole converſation on earth. Let us ſuppoſe him from day to day before our eyes, in all his

meek, humble, lovely deportment among men, and in the beams of majesty that appeared through the veil wherein he was pleased to inwrap himself: observe him going to and fro, and every where doing good, scattering blessings wherever he went; with what compassion and tenderness he healed the sick, instructed the ignorant, supplied and fed the hungry and necessitous; how he bare with the weak, forgave the injurious (even against his own life) and wept over secure and obstinate sinners; with what mighty power he cast out devils, raised the dead, commanded winds and seas, and they obeyed him; with what authority, zeal, and conviction, he contested with the hypocritical and unbelieving. And now suppose the veil laid aside, and the lustre of all these excellencies shining forth without the interposition of any obscuring cloud or shadow, and such a one is the blessed God! They that have seen

him have ſeen the Father. And is he not a God to be delighted in?

Above all, ſince he is only to be ſeen in his own light, pray earneſtly to the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, that he would give you the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. From ſuch as deſire to know him he will not conceal himſelf: following on to know the Lord, you ſhall know. By your craving looks, and the expecting poſture of your waiting eye, you draw forth and invite his enlightening communications; and be aſſured he will be more ready to give than you can be to receive. They that ſeek ſhall find, and to him that knocketh it ſhall be opened.

CHAP. X.

The Chriſtian's want of comfort in religion attributed to his neglect of God.

Some directions to attain a better frame of mind.

IT is a ſad but apparent truth, that whatever is ſinful or uncomfortable in the lives of thoſe who have devoted themſelves to God, proceeds from their neglecting to mind God and to delight in him: to this is owing that they are ſo often loſt in darkneſs, drowned in carnality, buried in earthlineſs, and overwhelmed with miſeries and deſolation of ſpirit: they ſet their thoughts upon things, that tend either to corrupt and deprave their minds, or to diſquiet and afflict them. Thoſe thoughts which let in ſins and calamities upon them as a flood, if placed

and exerciſed aright, would let in God upon them, fill them with his fulneſs, repleniſh their ſouls with his light, grace, and conſolations. Why ſhould we ſuppoſe our thoughts exempt from his government, or the obligation of his laws? Why ſhould it be reckoned leſs inſolent to ſay our thoughts, than our tongues are our own? Who is lord over us? May we not do what we will with our thoughts? Who gave us our thinking power, or made us capable of forming a thought? And can we have the confidence to tell God, we think about him as much as we can? How many idle thoughts in the day might we have exchanged for thoughts of God; and every thought have been to us a ſpring of pleaſure, and holy delight in him? If ever you will do any thing in this great buſineſs of delighting in God, you muſt arreſt your thoughts for him, and engage them in more conſtant converſe with him, mix prayer with

your thoughts, wherein your heart may breathe out ſuch requeſts as that of the Pſalmiſt; " Rejoice the ſoul of thy ſervant, for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my ſoul."

Solemnly ſet yourſelves at choſen times to think on God. Meditation is an important duty, and muſt have a conſiderable time allowed it among the other exerciſes of the Chriſtian life; it challenges a juſt ſhare and part in the time of our lives. Is it reaſonable that he, who is our life and our all, ſhould never be thought of, but now and then, as it were by chance, and by the by? " My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet: doth not this imply that it was with the Pſalmiſt a deſigned thing to meditate on God; that it was a ſtated courſe; it was become cuſtomary and uſual to him: meditating upon God was his well-known exerciſe, the joy and ſatisfaction of his ſoul.

Reckon that you have neglected one of the moſt important buſineſſes

of the day, if you have omitted this, and that to ſuch omiſſions is owing your little delight in God.

Think often of him amidſt your other affairs; let your ſtate or way of living be what it will, you are therein to abide with God; and how is that, but by often thinking of him; this is much of what is meant by abiding with him. How grateful a mixture would the thoughts of God make with that great variety of other things, which we are neceſſarily concerned in, while we are in this world! if they are right thoughts, they will tend to keep the heart in a diſpoſition for more delightful ſolemn intercourſe with God.

Your delight in God can find no way into your hearts, but by the exerciſe of your minds; here then you muſt apply yourſelves, with deſign and with ſerious diligence, and take pains with your recoiling thoughts. Do not excuſe your ſloth by ſaying that you cannot command your

thoughts. They who complain that they cannot attain to delight in God, or that their delight in him is faint and languiſhing, while in the mean time they uſe no endeavours to bend and direct their thoughts towards him, may be compared to the man who complains that he is in a ſtarving condition, but is ſo wretchedly ſlothful, that he will not take the pains to prepare or to eat his neceſſary food. God is no hard taſk-maſter, he does not require brick without ſtraw; he hath promiſed that he will give power to the faint, and to thoſe that have no might he hath promiſed to increaſe their ſtrength; he will not famiſh the ſouls that cry to him, and wait on him: their hearts ſhall live that ſeek God.

Take heed of more apparent and groſſer tranſgreſſions. Your ſecurity will not ſo much ariſe from your being out of the way of temptation, as from an habitual frame of holineſs, and the ſettled averſion of your

heart to ſin. Endeavour, by a growing conformity to God in the temper of your mind, to be in love with purity, that your heart may no more endure an impure thought, than you would fire in your boſom; if you are herein careleſs and remiſs, and ſuffer your heart to grow diſſolute, or more bold and adventurous in admitting ſinful thoughts; or if you have not leſs diſlike to any wicked courſe, wherein others take their liberty, you are approaching the borders of a dangerous precipice. And if ſome greater breach hereupon enſue between God and you, what becomes of your delight in him? A ſad interruption of ſuch pleaſant intercourſe cannot but follow, both on his part and on yours; on his part, a ſuſpenſion of thoſe communications of light and grace, which are neceſſary to your delight in him. It appears how much David's delight in God was intermitted, upon his great tranſgreſſion, when he prays, "Re-

ſtore unto me the joys of thy ſalvation."

And on your part will follow leſs liking of God's preſence, and even a dread of it; your inclination will not be towards him as before; though the acts of ſin are ſoon over, the effect will remain; even a carnal frame of mind that diſaffects converſe with God, and cares not to draw nigh to him. "Thou ſhalt put away iniquity from thy tabernacles; then ſhalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and thou ſhalt lift up thy face unto God."

CHAP. XI.

The Chriſtian earneſtly exhorted to aim at the higher ſtrains of devotion.

GOD is pleaſed to be called the Father of ſpirits; to have the ſpirits which are his offſpring ga-

thered around him, especially those who have revolted from him and are become sensible of their misery, saying, "Lo, now we come to thee, thou art the Lord our God!" craving his renewed communications; drawing vital influences from him and the breath of life; adoring his boundless fulness that filleth all in all.

It is his glory to have indigent souls satiating themselves in him, drawing from him their vital breath, living upon him as their all. And will it not be matter of delight to you to have such a Being every way perfect before your eyes? Try if it will not be pleasant to you to fall down before him, and give him glory; to join your praises and triumphant songs to those of saints and angels. To what transports have holy souls been raised upon the view and contemplation of his sovereign power and dominion; his wise and righteous government; his large and flowing goodness, that extends to all

the works of his hands! Endeavour to imitate the lively devotion which you meet with in the ſacred volume; for what has been matter of delight to the ſaints of old, ought ſurely to be ſo to you.

You ſometimes find them in a moſt complacential adoration of his wonderful wiſdom and counſel. "O the depths of the riches both of the wiſdom and counſels of God! How unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!" And again, "To God only wiſe be glory, through Jeſus Chriſt for ever. To the eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory for ever." Elſewhere we have them in tranſports admiring his holineſs, "Who is like thee, glorious in holineſs; there is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beſides thee, neither is there any rock like our God!" and this is recommended to his holy ones, as the ſpecial matter of their joy and praiſe:

" Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous and give thanks at the remembrance of his holineſs."

At other times we have their magnificent celebrations of his glorious power, and that by way of triumph over the Pagan gods: " Our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed, their idols are ſilver and gold: be thou exalted, O God, in thine own ſtrength. We will ſing and praiſe thy power: forſake me not, until I have ſhewed thy ſtrength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come." This is given out as the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb; " Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty."

And how do they magnify his mercy and goodneſs both towards his own people, and his creatures in general? " O how great is thy goodneſs, which thou haſt laid up for

them that fear thee, that thou haſt wrought for them that truſt in thee before the children of men! Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praiſe is comely for the upright. The earth is full of the goodneſs of the Lord. I will extol thee, my God, O King! I will bleſs thy name for ever and ever. Men ſhall ſpeak of the might of thy terrible acts; they ſhall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodneſs, and ſhall ſing of thy righteouſneſs. The Lord is gracious and full of compaſſion, ſlow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

And in what raptures do we often find them, in the contemplation of his faithfulneſs and truth, his juſtice and righteouſneſs, his eternity, the boundleſneſs of his preſence, the greatneſs of his works: "Who is a ſtrong God like unto thee, and to thy faithfulneſs round about thee? Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the hea-

vens, and thy faithfulneſs reaches unto the clouds; before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadſt formed the earth, or the world, from everlaſting to everlaſting, thou art God. But will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee. The works of the Lord are great, ſought out of them that have pleaſure therein. His work is honourable and glorious; all thy works ſhall praiſe thee, O Lord, and thy ſaints ſhall bleſs thee; they ſhall ſpeak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the ſons of men his mighty acts and the glorious majeſty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations."

And his glory in the general which reſults from his united excellencies, how loftily is it celebrated with the expreſſions of the moſt loyal deſires that it may be every where

enowned: "The glory of the Lord hall endure for ever; they ſhall ſing n the ways of the Lord, for great is he glory of the Lord. Be thou ex-lted above the heavens, let thy glory e above all the earth. Let them raiſe the name of the Lord; for his ame alone is excellent, his glory is ove the earth and the heavens."

When you read ſuch paſſages as heſe, you are to bethink yourſelves, ith what temper of mind they were ttered, with how raiſed and exalted ſpirit; what high delight and plea-ure was felt in glorifying God, or beholding him glorious. How rge and unbounded a heart, and ow full of his praiſe do they ex-reſs; when all nations, when all reatures, when every thing that ath breath, when heaven and earth, e invited together, to join in the oncert, and bear a part in his raiſes! And now do you view him the ſame characters under which ou have ſeen him ſo magnified, that

in the same way you may have your own heart wrought into the same temper towards him. Should it not provoke an emulation, and make you covet to be amidst the throng of loyal and devoted souls, when you see them ascending as if they were all incense; when you behold them dissolving and melting away in delight and love, and ready to expire even fainting that they can do no more; designing their very last breath should go forth in the close of a song: "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have a being." How becoming, to resolve this shall be my aim and ambition to fly the same, and, if it were possible, a greater height. Read over such psalms as are more especially designed for the magnifying of God; and when you see what it was that raised their spiritual and pious hearts, try to have your heart alike affected and transported with the same things.

magine that the invitation is directed
o you; "O come, let us ſing unto
he Lord, let us come before his
reſence with thankſgiving, and
ake a joyful noiſe to him with
ſalms: for the Lord is a great God
nd a great King above all gods:"
nd think within yourſelves, is he
ot as great as he was? Is he not
ur Maker as he was theirs? Is it
ot true, that the Lord reigneth, and
high above all the earth, and ex-
ted far above all gods? Now ſince
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fulneſs thereof, the floods clap their hands, the fields and the hills be joyful together, and all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord," while you only are ſilent and unconcerned. Thus were holy men of old taken up in admiring God, upon account of his own excellencies and glory, at the ſame time they were far from neglecting their own perſonal intereſt in him. How often do we find him ſpoken of under the names of their portion, heritage, &c. and in what raptures of joy do we often find them upon that account! So the Pſalmiſt conſiders him when he ſays, "The lines are fallen to me in pleaſant places, I have a goodly heritage." How often do we find them glorying in their relation by covenant, and making their boaſt of him as their God: "I will love thee, O Lord, my ſtrength, my rock, my fortreſs, my deliverer, my God." And afterwards, how glorious a triumph is there raiſed, and in what

exultations do we behold them upon this: "Who is God, ſave the Lord, and who is a rock, ſave our God? The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my rock; and let the God of my ſalvation be exalted." Theſe were ſome of the laſt words of the ſweet Pſalmiſt of Iſrael, "he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure; this is all my ſalvation and all my deſire:" with this, how well ſatisfied did he expire and go down to the grave! And the people of God are ſometimes repreſented as ſo taken with apprehenſion of their peculiar relation to God, that they cannot be content to know, but they muſt have it told to the following generations. "Let Mount Sion rejoice, that ye may tell the generations following—for this God is our God,"—this God! behold what a God we have! view him well, and take notice how glorious a God he is. And as they glory in

the greatneſs of the God to whom they are related, ſo they do in the eternity of the relation: "this God is our God for ever and ever!" And how inexpreſſible the pleaſure, with which we may ſuppoſe theſe words to be uttered, "God, even our own God, ſhall bleſs us!" Not only therefore allow, but urge your minds thus to look towards God, that you may delight in him, as being in himſelf the moſt excellent one, and as alſo being yours.

Above all, dwell much upon the hope of an eternal abode in that preſence, where is fulneſs of joy and pleaſures for evermore. Enjoy by a ſerious believing foreſight the delights of heaven; labour to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Look beyond this your preſent ſtate. Confine not your eye and delight to what is now to be enjoyed, but think of what ſhall be. Set before your eyes the glorious proſpect of the bleſſed

God, communicating himſelf to that vaſt aſſembly of angels and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, in cleareſt diſcoveries of his glory, and richeſt effuſions of his goodneſs. The beſt appearance of things in this world makes but a dull ſcene in compariſon of this. If you look towards God, according to what now appears of his glory in the frame of the univerſe, and the courſe of his adminiſtrations and government over his creatures, he hath not, it is true, left himſelf without witneſs. And you may behold much that would be to you matter of delightful admiration, if your eye be clear, and can pierce through clouds, and darkneſs, and a manifold vail. He hath made this world, and is every where in it, but it knows him not. His light ſhines in darkneſs, that doth not comprehend it. Beams of his glory do every where break forth, through every creature, providence,

law, and ordinance of his. But much of his glory, that shines in the creation, is hid by a train of second causes, through which few look to the first. His laws men judge of according to their interests and inclinations, while the holy glorious Majesty that enacted them is out of sight. His work in the world is carried on in a mystery; his interest lives, but is depressed; they who are most devoted to him are supported indeed by his invisible hand but are for the most part low and afflicted.

If you now limit and confine your apprehension of him to his present appearances, the matter of your delight is real, but much diminished.

But conceive of him, as your faith can behold him at a distance, in that posture, wherein, having settled the eternal state of things, he will finally shew himself. Conceive him

s having now gathered home all
nat have been recovered to him out
f the apoſtacy, and joined them to
hoſe numberleſs legions of innocent
nd pure ſpirits about his throne
hat never offended. Conceive him
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earts of them that expreſſed fidelity
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f his love, and making rivers of
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FINIS.

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